THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE WORKS
OF
IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

SPRING FRESHETS
SMOKE

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY
ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

PRINTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

WILLEY BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK

57074

Copyright, 1904, by
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Printed in the United States of America

LIBRARY OF CALIFORNIA
SOUTHERN BRANCH

3421
A1
1903c
v.6

CONTENTS

PAGE

SPRING FRESHETS 1

KNOCK . . . KNOCK . . . KNOCK 239

THE WATCH 291

SPRING FRESHETS

(1871)

SPRING FRESHETS

The merry years,
The happy days,—
Like freshets in spring
They have dashed past!

From an ancient Ballad.

ABOUT two o'clock in the morning, he returned to his study. He dismissed the servant, struck a match,—and, flinging himself into an arm-chair near the fireplace, he covered his face with both hands.

Never before had he felt such fatigue—both physical and spiritual. He had spent the entire evening with agreeable ladies, with cultured men: some of the ladies were handsome, nearly all the men were distinguished for wit and talents—he himself had conversed with great success, and even brilliantly . . . and, nevertheless, never before had that *tædium vitæ* of which the Romans talked, that "disgust with life," taken possession of him with irresistible force, and had stifled him. Had he been a little younger he would have wept with melancholy, boredom, irritation: a caustic and burning bitterness, like the bitterness of wormwood, filled his soul to overflowing. Something importunately-loathsome, repulsively-oppressive, invested him on all

sides, like a gloomy, autumnal night;—and he did not know how to rid himself of that gloom, of that bitterness. It was useless to rely upon sleep to do it: he knew well that he could not sleep.

He set to meditating . . . slowly, languidly, and spitefully.

He meditated upon the vanity, the uselessness, the stale falsity of everything human. All ages of man gradually passed in review before his mental vision—(he himself had passed his fifty-second birthday not long before)—and not one of them found any mercy at his hands. Everywhere there was the same eternal pouring of the empty into the void, the same beating of the empty air, the same half-conscientious, half-conscious self-deception,—anything with which to soothe the child, so that it might not cry,—and then, all of a sudden old age descends unexpectedly, like snow on the head,—and along with it, that constantly-augmenting, all-devouring, and gnawing fear of death . . . . and, flop into the abyss! And it is a good thing if life does wind up in that way!—Otherwise, probably, before the end, feebleness, suffering will come like rust on grain. . . . The sea of life did not appear to him, as the poets describe it, covered with stormy waves; no:—he depicted to himself that sea as imperturbably-smooth, motionless and transparent to even its very dark bottom; he himself is sitting in a small, cranky boat,—and down yon-

der, on that dark, slimy bottom, horrible monsters, in the likeness of huge fishes, are dimly visible: all the ills of life, sicknesses, woes, madnesses, poverty, blindness. . . . He gazes: and lo, one of the monsters detaches itself from the gloom, rises higher and higher, grows more and more distinct, more repulsively-distinct. . . . Another minute—and the boat which is resting upon it will be overturned! But behold, it seems to grow dim once more, it retreats, sinks to the bottom—and there it lies, barely moving its gills. . . . But the fatal day will come when it will capsize the boat.

He shook his head, jumped up from his chair, strode up and down the room a couple of times, seated himself at the writing-table, and pulling out one drawer after another, he began to rummage among his old papers, among ancient letters, chiefly from women. He himself did not know why he was doing this; he was not searching for anything—he was simply desirous of ridding himself, by some external activity, of the thoughts which were oppressing him. Unfolding, at haphazard, several letters (in one of them he found some withered flowers, bound with a faded ribbon), he merely shrugged his shoulders, and casting a glance at the fireplace, flung them aside, probably making ready to burn all this useless rubbish. Hastily thrusting his hands, now into one, now into another drawer, he suddenly opened his eyes to their fullest extent, and

slowly drawing forth a small octagonal casket of ancient design, he slowly raised its lid. In the casket, beneath a double layer of cotton-wool, yellowed with age, was a tiny garnet cross.

For several moments he surveyed this little cross with bewilderment—and all at once he uttered a cry. . . . It was neither precisely pity nor yet joy which his features expressed. A man's face presents that sort of an expression when he chances suddenly to encounter another man, whom he has long lost from sight, whom he has once tenderly loved, and who now unexpectedly starts up before his vision, still the same—yet all altered by the years.

He rose to his feet, and returning to the fireplace, seated himself once more in his arm-chair—and once more held his face in his hands. . . . "Why to-day? To-day in particular?" he thought to himself—and he recalled many things which had taken place long ago.

This is what he called to mind . . . .

But first we must tell his name, patronymic and surname. He was called Sánin, Dmítry Pávlovitch.

This is what he called to mind . . . .

I

It was the year 1840. Sánin was in his twenty-third year, and was in Frankfurt, on his homeward road from Italy to Russia. He was a man

of small but independent fortune, almost totally devoid of family. He possessed a few thousand rubles, which had come to him on the death of a distant relative—and he decided to spend them abroad, before entering government service, before definitively donning that official harness without which an existence free from anxiety was inconceivable for him. Sánin carried out his intention to the letter, and managed matters so artfully that on the day of his arrival in Frankfurt he had just money left to take him to Petersburg. In 1840 there was only the smallest amount of railways in existence; tourists travelled in stage-coaches. Sánin engaged a place in the *Beiwagen;* but the diligence did not start until eleven o'clock at night. He had a great deal of time on his hands. Fortunately, the weather was very fine—and Sánin, after dining in the then renowned hostelry "The White Swan," set out to roam about the town. He dropped in to have a look at Dannecker's "Ariadne," which did not please him much, visited the house of Goethe, of whose writings, by the way, he had read only "Werther"—and that in a French translation; he strolled along the banks of the Main, got bored, as is proper for a well-ordered traveller; at last, at six o'clock in the evening, he found himself weary, with dusty feet, in one of the most insignificant streets of Frankfurt. For a long time thereafter he was unable to forget that street.

On one of its not very numerous houses he espied a sign: the "Italian Confectionery Shop of Giovanni Roselli" announced itself to passers-by.

Sánin stepped in to drink a glass of lemonade; but in the first room, where, behind a modest counter, on the shelves of a painted cupboard, suggestive of an apothecary's shop, stood several bottles with gilt labels, and a corresponding number of glass jars filled with rusks, chocolate cakes, and caramels—in this room there was not a living soul; only a grey cat was blinking and purring, as she opened and shut her paws on a tall wattled chair near the window,—and, glowing vividly in the slanting rays of the evening sun, a big ball of scarlet wool lay on the floor, alongside an overturned basket of carved wood. A confused noise was audible in the adjoining room. Sánin stood still, and after allowing the little bell on the door to ring itself out, he exclaimed, raising his voice: "Is there any one here?" At that moment the door of the adjoining room opened—and Sánin was impelled to involuntary amazement.

II

Into the confectioner's shop, with her dark curls scattered over her shoulders, and bare arms extended before her, ran impetuously a young girl of nineteen, and on catching sight of Sánin, instantly rushed up to him, seized him by the hand,

and drew him after her, saying in a panting voice: "Quick, quick, this way, to the rescue!" Sánin did not immediately follow the girl—not because of reluctance to comply with her request, but simply from excessive surprise—and remained, as it were, stubbornly rooted to the spot: in all his life he had never beheld such a beauty. She turned toward him—and ejaculated, with such despair in her voice, in her eyes, in the gesture of her clenched fist: "Come, pray come!"—that he immediately rushed after her through the open door.

In the room, into which he ran behind the young girl, upon an old-fashioned horsehair couch, all white—white with yellowish reflections, like wax or ancient marble,—lay a lad of fourteen, who bore a striking resemblance to the young girl and was, evidently, her brother. His eyes were closed; the shadow of his heavy black hair fell in a patch upon his forehead, which seemed turned to stone, upon his slender, motionless eyebrows; his clenched teeth were visible between his blue lips. He did not seem to be breathing;—one arm lay on the floor, the other he had thrown above his head. The boy was fully dressed, and his clothing was buttoned up; a tight neckcloth compressed his neck.

The young girl rushed to him with a shriek. "He is dead, he is dead!" she screamed; "a moment ago he was sitting here, talking with me—

and all of a sudden, he fell down and became motionless . . . O my God! can it be that there is no help for it? And mamma is not here! Pantaleone, Pantaleone, what about the doctor?" she suddenly added in Italian: "Didst thou go for a doctor?"

"I did not go, Signora, I sent Luisa," rang out a husky voice beyond the door,—and limping on his crooked legs, there entered the room a little old man in a lilac dress-coat with black buttons, a tall white neckcloth, short nankeen trousers, and blue worsted stockings. His tiny face was quite concealed beneath a perfect pile of iron-grey hair. Standing up stiffly in all directions, and falling back again in dishevelled locks, it imparted to the old man's figure a likeness to a crested hen,—a likeness the more striking in that beneath their dark-grey mass nothing was to be distinguished save a sharp-pointed nose and round, yellow eyes.

"Luisa runs faster, and I cannot run," went on the little old man, in Italian, lifting his flat, gouty feet, clad in tall slippers with ribbon bows, alternately,—"but I have brought some water."

In his gaunt, calloused fingers he clutched the long neck of a bottle.

"But meanwhile Émile will die!" cried the girl, stretching out her hand toward Sánin.—"Oh, sir, *O mein Herr!*—Cannot you help us?"

"We must let blood—it is a stroke of apo-

plexy,"—remarked the old man, who bore the name of Pantaleone.

Although Sánin had not the faintest understanding of the medical art, he knew one thing for a fixed fact: lads of fourteen do not have attacks of apoplexy.

"It is a swoon, not an apoplectic fit,"—said he, addressing Pantaleone.—"Have you a brush?"

The old man raised his tiny face a little.—"What?"

"A brush, a brush,"—repeated Sánin, in German and in French.

"A brush,"—he added, pretending in dumb-show that he was cleaning his clothes.

At last the old man understood him.

"Ah, a brush! *Spazzette!* Of course we have a brush!"

"Bring it hither; we will take off his coat—and rub him."

"Good . . . . *Benone!* And shall not we pour water on his head?"

"No . . . afterward; go now, and fetch the brush as quickly as possible."

Pantaleone set the bottle on the floor, ran out of the room, and immediately returned with two brushes, a hair-brush and a clothes-brush. A curly poodle accompanied him, and wagging his tail briskly, stared curiously at the little old man, the young girl and even Sánin—as though desirous of finding out what all this tumult meant.

Sánin promptly removed the coat of the prostrate lad, unhooked his collar, stripped up his shirt-sleeves—and arming himself with the brush, began to rub his breast and arms with all his might. Pantaleone rubbed the hair-brush over his boots and trousers, with equal zeal. The girl flung herself on her knees beside the couch, and clutching her head with both hands, without winking an eyelash, she riveted her gaze on her brother's face.

Sánin rubbed away,—and surveyed her with a sidelong gaze as he did so. Good heavens! what a beauty she was!

III

Her nose was rather large, but handsome, of the aquiline type; her upper lip was just barely shaded with down; on the other hand, her complexion was smooth and dead-white, precisely like ivory or milky amber; the shining masses of her hair were like those of Allori's "Judith" in the Palazzo Pitti,—and especially her eyes, dark grey, with a black rim around the pupil, were magnificent, conquering eyes,—even now when fright and grief had dimmed their lustre. . . . Sánin involuntarily called to mind the wondrous land whence he had just returned . . . Yes, even in Italy he had not met anything like her! The young girl breathed infrequently and un-

evenly; she seemed each time to be waiting to see whether her brother would breathe.

Sánin continued to rub him; but he did not look at the young girl alone. Pantaleone's original figure also attracted his attention. The old man grew quite weak, and panted for breath; with every stroke of the brush he gave a leap and a grunt, while his huge mass of shaggy hair, dampened with perspiration, rocked from side to side like the roots of a vast plant undermined by water.

"Do take off his boots, at least,"—Sánin felt like saying to him. . . .

The poodle, probably excited by the unwontedness of what was going on, suddenly sank down on his forepaws and began to bark.

"Tartaglia, *canaglia!*"—hissed the old man at him. . . .

But at that moment the young girl's face underwent a transformation; her eyes grew larger, and began to beam with joy. . . . Sánin glanced round . . . . A flush mounted to the face of the young man; his eyelids moved and his nostrils quivered. He inhaled air through his still clenched teeth, sighed . . . .

"Émile!"—cried the girl. . . . "Emilio *mio!*"

Slowly the great black eyes opened. Their glance was still dull, but they were already smiling faintly; the same faint smile descended to

the pale lips. Then he moved his pendent arm—and with a flourish laid it on his breast.

"Emilio!"—repeated the young girl, and half rose to her feet. The expression of her face was so strong and brilliant that it seemed as though her tears would spring forth or that she would break into laughter.

"Émile! What is it? Émile!"—rang out a voice outside the door—and with swift steps, a neatly-attired woman, with silvery-grey hair and a swarthy complexion, entered the room. An elderly man followed her; the head of a maid-servant peered from behind his shoulders.

The young girl ran to meet them.

"He is saved, mamma, he lives!"—she exclaimed, convulsively embracing the lady who had entered.

"But what is the matter?"—repeated the latter. . . "I am on my way home, when suddenly I meet the doctor and Luisa. . . . " The girl began to relate what had happened, while the doctor stepped up to the sick boy, who was coming more and more to himself—and still continued to smile: he seemed to be ashamed of the alarm which he had caused.

"You have been rubbing him with brushes, I see,"—said the doctor to Sánin and Pantaleone, —"and it was well done. . . . A very good idea . . . . and now let us see what further remedies. . . ."

He felt the young man's pulse.—"H'm! show your tongue!"

The lady bent anxiously over him. He smiled more frankly than before, turned his eyes on her —and flushed scarlet. . .

It occurred to Sánin that his presence was becoming superfluous; he went out into the confectioner's shop. But before he could grasp the handle of the street door, the young girl again appeared before him, and stopped him.

"You are going away,"—she began, gazing caressingly in his face; "I will not detain you, but you must come to us again this evening, without fail; we are so greatly indebted to you,—you may have saved my brother's life—we wish to thank you—mamma wishes to thank you. You must tell us who you are, you must rejoice with us. . . . . "

"But I am setting out for Berlin to-day,"—stammered Sánin.

"You will have plenty of time,"—returned the young girl vivaciously.—"Come to us an hour hence, to drink a cup of chocolate. Do you promise? But I must go back to him! Will you come?"

What was there left for Sánin to do?

"I will," he replied.

The beauty gave his hand a hasty pressure, and fluttered forth—and he found himself in the street.

IV

When Sánin, an hour and a half later, returned to Roselli's confectionery shop, he was welcomed there like a relative. Emilio was sitting on the same couch on which they had rubbed him; the doctor had prescribed some medicine for him, and had recommended "great caution in the experience of emotion,"—as being of a nervous temperament, and with a tendency to heart-disease. He had previously been subject to fainting fits; but never had an attack been so prolonged and so violent. The doctor had declared, however, that all danger was over. Émile was dressed as befits a convalescent, in a loose dressing-gown; his mother had wound a blue woollen kerchief round his neck; but he wore a cheerful, almost festive aspect; and everything round about him also wore a festive aspect. In front of the couch, on a round table covered with a clean cloth, and surrounded by cups, caraffes with syrup, biscuits, and rolls, even with flowers,—rose a huge, porcelain coffee-pot filled with fragrant chocolate; six slender wax tapers burned in two antique silver candelabra; on one side of the divan, a reclining chair opened its soft embrace—and Sánin was placed in this chair. All the inhabitants of the confectioner's shop, with whom he had had occasion to make acquaintance that day, were present, not

excepting the poodle Tartaglia and the cat; all seemed unspeakably happy; the poodle even sneezed with pleasure; the cat alone, as before, kept blinking and purring. They made Sánin explain who he was, and whence he came, and what was his name; when he said that he was a Russian, both the ladies displayed some surprise, and even uttered an exclamation,—and immediately, in one voice, declared that he spoke German capitally; but if he found it more convenient to express himself in French, he might employ that language, as both of them understood it well, and expressed themselves well in it. Sánin immediately availed himself of this suggestion. "Sánin! Sánin!"—The ladies had never supposed that a Russian surname could be so easily pronounced. His Christian name, "Dmítry," also pleased them greatly. The elder lady remarked that in her youth she had heard a fine opera: "Demetrio e Polibio"—but that "Dmítry" was much nicer than "Demetrio." In this manner did Sánin chat for about an hour. The ladies, on their side, initiated him into all the details of their own life. The mother, the lady with the grey hair, did most of the talking. From her Sánin learned that her name was Leonora Roselli; that she was the widow of Giovanni Battista Roselli, who had settled in Frankfurt twenty-five years previously, as a confectioner; that Giovanni Battista had been a native of

Vicenza, and a very good, though rather peppery and irritable man, and a republican into the bargain! As she uttered these words, Signora Roselli pointed to his portrait, painted in oils, which hung over the couch. We must assume that the artist—"also a republican," as Signora Roselli remarked with a sigh—had not quite succeeded in catching the likeness,—for in his portrait the late Giovanni Battista was represented as a sort of grim and gloomy brigand—in the style of Rinaldo Rinaldini! Signora Roselli herself was a native of "the ancient and beautiful city of Parma, where there is such a magnificent dome, painted by the immortal Correggio!" But through prolonged residence in Germany, she had become almost a German. Then she added, with a mournful shake of the head, that all she had left was this daughter, and *this* son (she pointed her finger at them in turn);—that her daughter's name was Gemma, and her son's, Emilio; that they were both very good and obedient children—especially Emilio . . . . ("I'm not obedient!" put in her daughter at this point; —"Okh, thou art a republican also!" replied her mother);—that business was not as good now, of course, as in her husband's time, for he had been a great master in the confectioner's art . . . . (*"Un grand' uomo!"*—interposed Pantaleone with a morose aspect); but that, nevertheless, they were able to make a living, thank God!

V

Gemma listened to her mother—now laughing, now sighing, now stroking her on the shoulder, again menacing her with her finger, now glancing at Sánin; at last she rose, embraced her mother, and kissed her on the neck,—on the throat just under the chin, which made the latter laugh a great deal and even squeal. Pantaleone was also introduced to Sánin. It appeared that he had formerly been an opera-singer, in barytone parts, but had long since dropped his theatrical occupations, and had become something midway between a friend of the house and a servant in the Roselli family. Notwithstanding his long residence in Germany, he had acquired the German language only in an imperfect manner, and mercilessly murdered even the words of abuse. *"Ferrofluchto spiccebubbio!"* was what he called nearly every German. But the Italian language he spoke in perfection, being a native of Sinigaglia, where is heard the *"lingua toscana in bocca romana!"* Emilio was obviously pampering himself, and surrendering himself to the agreeable sensations of a man who has just escaped danger, or is convalescing; and, moreover, it was perceptible, from all the indications, that the members of the household spoiled him with petting. He thanked Sánin in a bashful way, but

devoted himself chiefly to the syrup and the candy. Sánin was compelled to drink two large cups of superb chocolate, and to consume a remarkable amount of biscuits; no sooner had he swallowed one than Gemma offered him another —and it was impossible to refuse! He speedily felt himself quite at home: time sped on with incredible swiftness. He had to tell a great deal about Russia in general, about Russian society; about the Russian peasant—and especially about the kazáks; about the War of 1812, about Peter the Great, the Kremlin, Russian ballads and bells. Both of the ladies had but a very feeble conception of our vast and distant fatherland; Signora Roselli, or, as she was more frequently called, Frau Lenore, even amazed Sánin with the question: whether the famous ice-palace built in St. Petersburg during the last century, concerning which she had recently read such a curious article—in one of her deceased husband's books —"Bellezze delle Arti"—was still in existence? —and in response to Sánin's exclamation: "Can it be possible that you think there is never any summer in Russia!" Frau Lenore replied that up to that time she had depicted Russia to herself in the following manner: eternal snow, every one going about in fur cloaks, and everybody in the military service—but remarkable hospitality, and all the peasants very obedient! Sánin endeavoured to impart to her and her daughter more ac-

curate information. When the conversation turned on Russian music, he was immediately asked to sing some Russian air, and a tiny piano, with black keys instead of white and white instead of black, which stood in the room, was pointed out to him. He complied without further ado, and accompanying himself with two fingers of his right hand, and three of his left (the thumb, middle finger and little finger), he sang, in a thin, nasal tenor, first "The Red Sarafán,"[1] and then "Along a Paved Street." The ladies praised his voice and the music, but went into raptures more particularly over the softness and melody of the Russian language and demanded a translation of the text. Sánin complied with their request—but as the words of "The Red Sarafán," and particularly those of "Along a Paved Street" (*sur une rue pavée une jeune fille allait à l'eau*—thus did he render the meaning of the original), could not inspire his hearers with a lofty idea of Russian poetry, he first declaimed, then translated, then sang Púshkin's "I Remember a Wondrous Moment," set to music by Glinka, whose couplets in minor tones he slightly distorted. The ladies went into ecstasies,—Frau Lenore even discovered a wonderful resemblance between the Russian language and the Italian. *"Mnogvénie"*

[1] The sarafán is the frock, suspended from the shoulders, of peasant maidens.—TRANSLATOR.

—*"o vieni"*—*"co mnóï"*—*"siam noi,"*—and so forth. Even the names Púshkin (she pronounced it Pussekin) and Glinka sounded familiar to her. Sánin, in his turn, requested the ladies to sing something: and they, also, were quite unaffected. Frau Lenore seated herself at the piano, and in company with Gemma, she sang several duettini and *stornelli.* The mother had once had a fine contralto; the daughter's voice was rather weak, but agreeable.

VI

It was not Gemma's voice, however, but the girl herself that Sánin admired. He sat somewhat behind her and to one side, and thought to himself that no palm-tree—even in the verses of Benediktoff, who was then the fashionable poet, —was capable of vying with the slender elegance of her figure. And when, at the sentimental notes, she rolled her eyes upward, it seemed to him that there was no heaven which would not open wide at such a glance. Even old Pantaleone, who was leaning his shoulder against the jamb of the door, with his chin and mouth buried in his capacious neckcloth, listened sedately, with the air of an expert,—even he admired the face of the beautiful girl, and was amazed at it,—and yet, apparently, he must have been used to it! On finishing her duettino with her daughter,

Frau Lenore remarked that Emilio had a capital voice—genuine silver—but that he had now attained the age when the voice undergoes a change —(in fact, he spoke in a sort of basso voice which was incessantly breaking)—and for that reason, he was forbidden to sing; but that Pantaleone here might, in honor of the visitor, recall his earlier days! Pantaleone immediately assumed an aspect of displeasure, frowned, rumpled up his hair, and announced that he had long since given up all that sort of thing, although he really had been able, in his youth, to hold his own —and, moreover, in general, he belonged to that grand epoch when genuine, classical singers existed—not to be mentioned in the same breath with the squallers of the present day! and a genuine school of singing; that a laurel wreath had once been presented to him, Pantaleone Cippatóla, in Modena, and several white doves had even been set free in the theatre on that occasion; that, among others, a Russian Prince Tarbusky—*"il Principe Tarbusski"*—with whom he had been on the most intimate terms, had incessantly invited him, at supper, to Russia, had promised him mountains of gold, mountains! . . . but that he had not been willing to leave Italy, the land of Dante—*"il paese del Dante!"*—later on, of course, unfortunate circumstances arose, he himself was incautious. . . . Here the old man interrupted himself, heaved a couple of profound

sighs, cast down his eyes—and again began to talk about the classic era of singing, about the famous tenor Garcia, for whom he cherished a reverent, boundless respect. "There was a man!"—he exclaimed. Never did the great Garcia—*"il gran Garcia!"*—condescend to sing like the wretched little tenors of the present day—the *tenorecci*—in falsetto: he always sang from the chest, the chest, *voce di petto, si!* The old man dealt himself a stiff blow on his neckcloth with his tiny, lean hand. And what an actor! A volcano, *signori miei,* a volcano, *un Vesuvio!* "I had the honour to sing with him in the opera *'dell' illustrissimo maestro Rossini'*—in 'Otello!' Garcia was Otello—I was Iago—and when he uttered this phrase . . . . "

Here Pantaleone struck an attitude, and began to sing in a hoarse and quavering, but still pathetic voice:

"L'i. . . . ra daver. . . . so daver. . . .
Io più no. . . . no. . . . no. . . . non temerò!

The theatre quaked, *signori miei!* but I did not stop; and I also sang after him:

L'i. . . . ra daver. . . . so daver. . . . so il fato
Temer più non dovrò!

And all at once he—like lightning, like a tiger: *'Morrò . . . . ma vindicato . . . . '*

"Or here again, when he sang . . . . when he sang that celebrated aria from *'Il Matrimonio Segreto': Pria che spunti.* . . . Then he, *il gran Garcia,* after the words: *I cavalli di galoppo*—did this on the words: *Senza posa cacciera*—listen, how amazing it is, *com'è stupendo!* Then he did this. . . . " The old man tried to execute some remarkable sort of fioritura—but broke off short on the tenth note, cleared his throat, and with a wave of his hand, turned away, muttering:—"Why do you torture me?" Gemma immediately sprang from her chair, and clapping her hands loudly, with the cry: "Bravo!" ran to poor, retired Iago, and tapped him affectionately on the shoulders with both hands. Émile alone laughed mercilessly. *"Cet âge est sans pitié,"*—La Fontaine has said.

Sánin tried to comfort the aged singer, and began to talk with him in the Italian tongue—(he had picked up a little of it during his late journey)—began to talk about *"Il paese del Dante, dove il si suona."* This phrase, together with *"Lasciate ogni speranza,"* constituted the young tourist's entire poetical baggage in Italian; but Pantaleone did not yield to his blandishments. Plunging his chin more deeply than ever into his neckcloth, and protruding his eyes morosely, he again resembled a bird, and an enraged bird, at that,—a crow or a kite. Then Émile, flushing slightly and momentarily,—

as is generally the case with petted children,—turned to his sister, and said to her that if she wished to entertain the guest, she could devise nothing better than to read him one of Maltz's little comedies, which she read so well. Gemma laughed, slapped her brother's hand, and exclaimed that he "was always inventing something of that sort!" Nevertheless, she immediately went to her own room, and returning thence with a small book in her hand, seated herself at the table, near the lamp, cast a glance about her, raised her finger—as much as to say: "Silence!"—a purely Italian gesture—and began to read.

VII

Maltz was a Frankfurt writer of the '30's, who, in his brief and lightly sketched little comedies, written in the local dialect, portrayed with amusing and dashing, although not profound humour, the local Frankfurt types. It appeared that Gemma really did read capitally—quite like an actress. She imparted a distinct hue to every personage, and preserved his character finely, putting in play her power of mimicry, which she had inherited along with her Italian blood; sparing neither her tender voice, nor her beautiful face, when it became necessary to portray either an old woman who had outlived her wits, or a stupid

burgomaster,—she made the most mirth-provoking grimaces, screwed up her eyes, wrinkled her nose, lisped, squeaked shrilly. . . . She herself did not laugh while she was reading; but when her auditors (with the exception of Pantaleone, truth to tell: he immediately withdrew in dudgeon, as soon as it was a question of *"quello ferrofluchto Tedesco"*),—when her auditors interrupted her with bursts of hearty laughter, she dropped the book on her knees, emitted a ringing laugh herself, with her head thrown back—and her black curls danced in soft tendrils on her neck, and over her quivering shoulders. When the laughter ceased, she immediately raised her book, and again imparting to her features the proper twist, seriously resumed her reading. Sánin could not recover from his amazement at her; what particularly struck him was this: by what miracle could so ideally-beautiful a face suddenly assume so comical, sometimes almost trivial an expression? Gemma's rendering of the rôles of young girls—the so-called *"jeunes premières"*—was less satisfactory; she was particularly unsuccessful with the love scenes; she herself was conscious of this, and therefore imparted to them a slight tinge of absurdity—as though she did not believe in all those rapturous vows and high-flown speeches, from which, moreover, the author himself refrained, so far as that was possible.

Sánin did not observe how the evening was flitting by—and only recalled his impending journey when the clock struck ten. He sprang from his chair as though he had been scalded.

"What is the matter with you?"—asked Frau Lenore.

"Why, I was to have set off to-day for Berlin—and I have already secured my place in the diligence!"

"And when does the diligence start?"

"At half-past ten!"

"Well, then you will not catch it,"—remarked Gemma; "stay . . . and I will read some more."

"Did you pay all the money down, or did you merely make a deposit?"—inquired Frau Lenora.

"I paid all!"—cried Sánin, with a sorry grimace.

Gemma looked at him, narrowed her eyes—and laughed, but her mother reproved her.—"The young man has spent his money for nothing,—and thou laughest!"

"Never mind!"—replied Gemma;—"it will not ruin him, and we will try to console him. Would you like some lemonade?"

Sánin drank a glass of lemonade, Gemma began again on Maltz—and again everything flowed on as smoothly as though it had been oiled.

The clock struck twelve. Sánin began to take leave.

"Now you must remain for several days in Frankfurt,"—Gemma said to him: "what's your hurry? Things will be no jollier in any other town."—She paused. "Really, they will not,"—she added, smiling. Sánin made no reply and reflected that, in view of the emptiness of his purse, he would be compelled, willy-nilly, to remain in Frankfurt, until an answer should arrive from a friend in Berlin, to whom he contemplated applying for money.

"Stay, do stay,"—Frau Lenore added her entreaties. "We will introduce you to Gemma's betrothed, Herr Karl Klüber. He could not come to-day, because he is very busy in his shop . . . . surely you must have noticed in the Zeil the largest shop for cloths and silken materials? Well, he is the chief man there. But he will be very glad to be presented to you."

This piece of information chagrined Sánin somewhat—God knows why. "That betrothed is a lucky fellow!" flashed through his mind. He glanced at Gemma—and it seemed to him that he descried a mocking expression in her eyes. He began to take leave.

"Until to-morrow? It is until to-morrow, is it not?"—asked Frau Lenore.

"Until to-morrow!" articulated Gemma, not

in an interrogative but in an affirmative tone, as though it could not be otherwise.

"Until to-morrow!"—responded Sánin.

Émile, Pantaleone, and the poodle Tartaglia escorted him to the corner of the street. Pantaleone could not refrain from expressing his displeasure over Gemma's reading.

"She ought to be ashamed of herself! She writhes and squeals—*una caricatura!* She ought to personate Merope or Clytemnestra—something grand, tragic—but she mimics some miserable German female! I can do that myself . . . . *'Mertz, kertz, smertz,'*"—he added, in a hoarse voice, thrusting forward his face, and spreading out his fingers. Tartaglia began to bark at him, and Émile burst into loud laughter. The old man turned back abruptly.

Sánin returned to his hostelry, "The White Swan" (he had left his things there, in the general room), in a decidedly confused state of mind. All those German-French-Italian conversations were fairly ringing in his ears.

"An affianced bride!"—he whispered, as he lay in bed, in the modest chamber assigned to him. "But what a beauty! But why did I stay?"

Nevertheless, on the following day, he despatched a letter to his friend in Berlin.

VIII

Before he had succeeded in getting dressed a waiter announced to him the arrival of two gentlemen. One of them turned out to be Émile; the other, a stately well-grown young man, with an extremely handsome face, was Herr Karl Klüber, the betrothed of the lovely Gemma.

We are at liberty to infer that, at that time, there was not, in a single shop in the whole of Frankfurt, so polite, decorous, dignified, and amiable a head-clerk as Herr Klüber showed himself to be. The irreproachableness of his toilet equalled the dignity of his demeanour, the elegance—somewhat affected and constrained, it is true, after the English fashion (he had spent a couple of years in England)—but, nevertheless, engaging elegance of his manners! At the very first glance it became clear that this handsome, rather stiff, excellently educated and capitally washed young man was accustomed to obey his superiors and to command his inferiors, and that behind the counter of his shop he was bound to evoke the respect even of his patrons! As to his supernatural honesty there could not exist the shadow of a doubt. A glance at his stiffly-starched cuffs was all that was required. And his voice proved to be just what was to have been expected: thick and self-

confidently-succulent, but not too loud, with even a certain caressing quality in the timbre. Such a voice is particularly well adapted for issuing orders to subordinate clerks: "Show that piece of crimson Lyons velvet!"—or, "Give the lady a chair!"

Herr Klüber began by introducing himself, during which operation he bent his form in so noble a manner, moved his feet so agreeably, and clicked one heel against the other so courteously, that one was bound to feel: "This man's body-linen and spiritual qualities are of the first order!" The elaborate finish of his bare right hand—(in his left, clad in a glove of undressed kid, he held a hat polished like a mirror, at the bottom of which lay the other glove)—the elaborate finish of that right hand, which he modestly but firmly offered to Sánin,—exceeded all belief: every nail was perfection in its way! Then he announced, in the choicest of German, that he had wished to express his respects and his gratitude to Monsieur the Stranger, who had rendered such an important service to his future relative, the brother of his affianced bride; whereupon, he waved his left hand, which held his hat, in the direction of Émile, who seemed to feel ashamed, and, turning away to the window, stuck his finger in his mouth. Herr Klüber added that he should consider himself happy if he, on his part, were in a position to do any-

thing agreeable for Monsieur the Stranger. Sánin replied, not without some difficulty, also in German, that he was delighted . . . that his service had been of very slight importance . . . . and begged his visitors to be seated. Herr Klüber thanked him—and, immediately drawing aside the skirts of his frock-coat, dropped into a chair—but dropped so lightly, and held himself upon it in so precarious a manner, that it was impossible not to think: "This man has seated himself out of politeness—and will flutter off again in another minute!" And, as a matter of fact, he did flutter off immediately, and shifting bashfully from one foot to the other a couple of times, as though dancing, he announced that, unhappily, he could not remain longer, for he was hastening to his shop—business before everything!—but, as to-morrow was Sunday, he had, with the consent of Frau Lenore and Fräulein Gemma, arranged a pleasure-party to Soden, to which he had the honour of inviting Monsieur the Stranger—and he cherished the hope that the latter would not refuse to adorn it with his presence. Sánin did not refuse to adorn it—and Herr Klüber made his obeisance a second time, and withdrew, pleasantly fluttering his trousers of the most tender greyish-yellow hue, and squeaking the soles of his very new boots in an equally agreeable manner.

IX

Émile, who continued to stand with his face to the window, even after Sánin's invitation to "be seated"—wheeled round to the left, as soon as his future relative was gone—and, grimacing and blushing in childish fashion, asked Sánin whether he might remain a little longer with him. "I am much better to-day,"—he added,—"but the doctor has forbidden me to work."

"Pray, remain! You do not incommode me in the least,"—instantly exclaimed Sánin, who, like all true Russians, was delighted to grasp at the first pretext which presented itself to escape being forced to do anything himself.

Émile thanked him—and, in the very briefest space of time, had made himself entirely at home both with him and with his quarters. He scrutinised his things, and asked questions about nearly every one of them: where he had bought this, and what were its merits? He helped him to shave, remarking incidentally that he made a mistake in not allowing his moustache to grow;—he finally imparted to him a multitude of details concerning his mother, his sister, Pantaleone, even the poodle Tartaglia, and about their whole manner of life. Every trace of timidity had vanished from Emile; he suddenly experienced a remarkable attraction toward Sánin—

and that not in the least because the latter had saved his life the day before, but because he was such a sympathetic man! He made no delay in confiding all his secrets to Sánin. He insisted with special fervour on the fact that his mamma was positively set upon making a merchant of him—while he *knew* for a certainty that he was born to be an artist, a musician, a singer; that the theatre was his true vocation; that even Pantaleone encouraged him, but that Herr Klüber upheld his mamma, over whom he had great influence; that the very idea of making a merchant of him belonged to Herr Klüber, according to whose conceptions nothing in the world could compare with the calling of the merchant! To sell cloth and velvet, and swindle the public, to get from it *"Narren- oder Russen-Preise"* (fools' or Russians' prices)—that was his ideal![1]

"Well, never mind! now we must go to our house!"—exclaimed he, as soon as Sánin had completed his toilet, and had written his letter to Berlin.

"It is early yet,"—remarked Sánin.

"That makes no difference,"—said Émile, coaxingly. "Come along! We will stop at the post-office—and from there go on to our

[1] In days gone by—yes, and probably even now—there has been no change in this respect: when, beginning with the month of May, a multitude of Russians made their appearance in Frankfurt, the prices rose in all the shops, and received the title of *"Russen-"*—or, alas!—*"Narren-Preise."*—Author's Note.

house. Gemma will be so glad to see you! You shall breakfast with us . . . . you can say something to mamma about me, about my career. . . ."

"Well, come on, then,"—said Sánin—and they set out.

X

Gemma really was delighted to see him, and Frau Lenore greeted him in a very friendly wise. It was plain that he had produced a good impression on all of them the preceding evening. Émile ran to see about breakfast, with a preliminary whisper in Sánin's ear: "Don't forget!"

"I will not,"—replied Sánin.

Frau Lenore was not feeling quite well: she was suffering from a sick headache—and, half reclining in an arm-chair, she tried to avoid moving. Gemma wore a loose yellow morning-gown, girt with a black leather belt; she, also, appeared fatigued, and had grown a little pale; dark circles shadowed her eyes, but their brilliancy was not diminished thereby, and her pallor imparted a certain mystery and charm to the classic severity of her features. Sánin was particularly impressed that day by the elegant beauty of her hands. When she adjusted and held up with them her dark, lustrous curls he could not tear his eyes from her fingers, slender

and long, and standing apart from one another, as in Raffaele's "Fornarina."

It was very hot out of doors. After breakfast Sánin started to go away, but he was told that on such a day it was better not to move from one spot—and he assented; he remained. In the rear room, in which he sat with his hostesses, coolness reigned; the windows opened upon a tiny garden, overgrown with acacias. A multitude of bees, wasps, and bumble-bees hummed sturdily and greedily in their thick branches, studded with golden flowers; through the half-closed shutters and lowered shades that unceasing sound penetrated into the room: it spoke of the sultry heat disseminated in the outer air—and the coolness of the closed and comfortable dwelling became all the more sweet by reason of it.

As on the preceding evening, Sánin talked a great deal, but not about Russia, and not about Russian life. Desirous of gratifying his young friend, who was sent off to Herr Klüber immediately after breakfast, to practise book-keeping, he turned the conversation upon the comparative advantages and disadvantages of art and commerce. He was not surprised that Frau Lenore upheld the side of commerce—he had expected that; but Gemma also shared her opinion.

"If you are an artist,—and especially a

57074

singer,"—she asserted, with an energetic downward movement of her hand,—"you must, without fail, be in the first place! The second is good for nothing; and who knows whether you can attain to the first place?"—Pantaleone, who was also taking part in the conversation—(in his quality of ancient servitor and an old man, he was even permitted to sit on a chair in the presence of his mistress; the Italians, in general, are not strict as to etiquette)—Pantaleone, as a matter of course, stood up stoutly for art. Truth to tell, his arguments were decidedly feeble. He talked chiefly about the necessity, first of all, of possessing *un certo estro d'inspirazione*—a certain impetuosity of inspiration. Frau Lenore observed to him that he himself, of course, did possess that *"estro,"*—and yet . . . . "I had enemies,"—remarked Pantaleone, morosely.—"Well, but how dost thou know"—(the Italians, as every one knows, easily fall into addressing as "thou")—"that Émile also will not have enemies, even if that *'estro'* should be discovered in him?"—"Well, then, make a shopkeeper out of him,"—said Pantaleone, angrily.—"But Giovan' Battista would not have acted so, even if he was a confectioner himself!"—"Giovan' Battista, my husband, was a sensible man—and even if he was tempted in his youth . . . ." But the old man would no longer listen, and took himself off, after having

once more said reproachfully: "Ah! Giovan' Battista!" . . . Gemma exclaimed that if Émile felt himself a patriot, and wished to consecrate all his forces to the emancipation of Italy,—of course, for such a lofty and sacred aim a safe future might be sacrificed—but not for the theatre! At this point, Frau Lenore began excitedly to entreat her daughter not to lead her brother astray, at least,—and to be content with the fact that she herself was such a desperate republican! After uttering these words, Frau Lenore groaned, and began to complain of her head, which "was ready to burst." (Frau Lenore, out of respect for her guest, talked in French to her daughter.)

Gemma immediately began to tend her, breathed softly on her brow, first moistening it with eau de cologne, softly kissed her cheeks, laid her head on a cushion, forbade her to speak —and kissed her again. Then, turning to Sánin, she began to tell him, in a half-jesting, half-moved tone, what a splendid mother she had, and what a beauty she had been! "Why do I say, 'has been!' she is charming even now. Look, look, what eyes she has!"

Gemma immediately pulled from her pocket a white handkerchief, covered her mother's face with it—and slowly lowering the edge from above downward, gradually revealed the forehead, the eyebrows, and the eyes of Frau Lenore.

She paused, and requested her to open them. Her mother obeyed; Gemma cried aloud with rapture (Frau Lenore's eyes really were very handsome)—and swiftly slipping the handkerchief past the lower, less regular portion of her mother's face, she began to kiss her again. Frau Lenore laughed, and turned slightly away, and thrust her daughter from her with some little force. The latter pretended to wrestle with her mother, and nestled up to her—yet not cat-wise, or in the French manner, but with that Italian grace, in which the presence of strength is always to be felt.

At last Frau Lenore declared that she was weary. . . . Then Gemma immediately advised her to take a little nap, there, in her chair,—" and the Russian gentleman and I . . *'avec le monsieur russe'*—will be so quiet, so quiet—like little mice . . . . *comme des petits souris.*" Frau Lenore smiled at her in reply, closed her eyes, and after drawing a few long breaths, fell into a doze.

Gemma briskly dropped upon a bench beside her and made no further movement, except that, from time to time, she raised the finger of one hand to her lips—with the other, she was supporting the cushion under her mother's head—and hissed in a barely-audible manner, casting a side-long glance at Sánin, when the latter permitted himself the slightest movement. It ended in his

becoming as still as death, and sitting immovably, as though enchanted, and with all the powers of his soul admiring the picture which was presented to him by this half-dark room, where here and there, like brilliant spots, glowed fresh, magnificent roses, placed in antique, green glasses—and that slumbering woman, with modestly-folded hands, and a kind, weary face, framed in the snowy white of the pillow, and that young, alertly-watchful and likewise kind, clever, pure, and unspeakably-beautiful being, with those deep black eyes, filled with shadow and yet beaming. . . . What was it? A dream? A fairy-tale? And how came *he* there?

XI

The little bell tinkled over the outer door. A young peasant lad, in a fur cap and a red waistcoat, entered the confectionery shop from the street. From early morning, not a single customer had even peeped into it. . . . "That 's the way we do business!"—Frau Lenore had remarked to Sánin, with a sigh, during breakfast. She continued to sleep; Gemma was afraid to remove her hand from the pillow, and whispered to Sánin: "Go, trade for me!" Sánin immediately stole out on tiptoe to the shop. The lad wanted a quarter of a pound of mint lozenges.—"How much shall I charge him?"—Sánin asked Gemma

in a whisper, through the door.—"Six kreutzers!" —she replied, in a corresponding whisper. Sánin weighed out a quarter of a pound, hunted up some paper, made a horn of it, wrapped up the lozenges, spilled them, wrapped them up again, spilled them again, and finally delivered them, and received the money. . . . The boy stared at him in amazement, twisting his cap about on his belly, and in the adjoining room, Gemma stopped up her mouth, and swooned with laughter. Before that customer could retire, another made his appearance, then a third. . . . "Evidently, I bring luck!" thought Sánin. The second asked for a glass of orgeat; the third, for half a pound of candy. Sánin waited on them, rattling the spoons with zeal, setting out saucers, and boldly dipping his fingers into drawers and jars. On reckoning up, it appeared that he had asked too little for the orgeat, and had charged two kreutzers too much for the candy. Gemma did not cease to laugh quietly, and Sánin was conscious of an unwonted, peculiarly happy frame of mind. It seemed as though he could stand like that behind a counter all his life, and deal out orgeat and candy, while such a lovely being was watching him from behind the door with eyes full of friendly ridicule; and the summer sun, forcing its way through the dense foliage of the chestnut-trees which grew in front of the windows, filled the whole room with the greenish-golden rays of

noonday, with noonday shadows, and the heart grew tender with the sweet languor of idleness, freedom from care, and youth—early youth!

The fourth customer ordered a cup of coffee; he was obliged to have recourse to Pantaleone (Émile had not yet returned from Herr Klüber's shop). Sánin seated himself again by Gemma's side. Frau Lenore continued to sleep, to the great satisfaction of her daughter.—"Mamma's headache passes off while she sleeps,"—she remarked. Sánin began to talk—in a whisper, as before, of course—about his "trade"; inquired very seriously as to the prices of the various "confectionery" wares; Gemma, in an equally serious manner, told him the prices, and, in the meantime, both laughed inwardly and heartily, as though conscious that they were playing a very amusing comedy. All at once, in the street, a hand-organ struck up the air: "*Durch die Felder, durch die Auen.*" . . . The plaintive sounds wailed quavering and whistling on the motionless air. Gemma shuddered. . . . "He will waken mamma!" Sánin instantly ran out into the street, thrust several kreutzers into the hand of the organ-grinder—and made him stop and go away. When he returned, Gemma thanked him with a slight nod of the head, and, pensively smiling, began herself, in a barely-audible voice, to hum Weber's beautiful melody, in which Max expresses all the bewilderment of first love. Then

she asked Sánin whether he was acquainted with "Freischütz," whether he liked Weber, and added that, although she herself was an Italian, she loved *such* music best of all. From Weber the conversation glided to poetry and romanticism, to Hoffmann, whom every one was reading at that time. . .

And Frau Lenore slept on, and even snored faintly, and the rays of sunlight, piercing through the shutters in narrow strips, imperceptibly, but incessantly, moved about and travelled over the floor, over the furniture, over Gemma's gown, over the leaves and petals of the flowers.

XII

It appeared that Gemma did not particularly favour Hoffmann, and even found him . . . tiresome! The fantastically-obscure, northern element of his tales was not very perceptible to her bright, southern nature. "They are all fairy tales, written for children!" she asserted, not without disdain. She also had a confused consciousness of the absence of poetry in Hoffmann. But there was one of his tales, whose title, however, she had forgotten, which pleased her greatly. Properly speaking, only the beginning of the tale pleased her: she had not read the end, or had forgotten it also. It was about a young man, who, somewhere or other, in a confectioner's

shop, so far as she remembered, meets a young girl of striking beauty, a Greek; she is accompanied by a mysterious and queer old man. The young man falls in love with the girl at the first glance; she gazes at him so pitifully, as though entreating him to set her free. . . . He withdraws for a moment—and on returning to the confectioner's shop, he no longer finds either the young girl or the old man; he rushes to seek her, is incessantly coming across perfectly fresh traces of them, follows them—and by no means, nowhere, never can he overtake them. The beauty vanishes from him forever and ever—and he is powerless to forget her beseeching look, and is tortured by the thought that, perchance, all the happiness of his life has slipped out of his hands.

Hoffmann hardly ends his tale in just that way; but so she had constructed it, and so it remained in Gemma's memory.

"It seems to me,"—she said,—"that such meetings and such partings occur in the world more frequently than we think."

Sánin remained silent . . . . and, a little while later, began to talk about . . . . Herr Klüber. It was the first time he had mentioned him: he had not even alluded to him until that moment.

Gemma became silent, in her turn, and meditated, lightly biting the nail of her forefinger, and fixing her eyes on one side. Then she began to laud her betrothed, referred to the pleasure-party

which he had arranged for the following day, and, darting a swift glance at Sánin, she relapsed into silence again.

Sánin did not know what subject of conversation to start.

Émile ran noisily in, and woke Frau Lenore. . . . Sánin rejoiced at his arrival.

Frau Lenore rose from her chair. Pantaleone presented himself, and announced that dinner was ready. The household friend, the ex-singer and servant, also discharged the functions of cook.

XIII

Sánin remained even after dinner. They would not let him go, still under the same pretext of the frightful sultriness,—and when the sultriness abated, they proposed to him to go into the garden, and drink coffee under the shade of the acacias. Sánin accepted. He felt greatly at his ease. In the monotonously-quiet and smoothly-flowing current of life great delights are hidden, —and he surrendered himself to them with delectation, demanding nothing in particular from the present day, but also thinking nothing about the morrow, recalling not yesterday. What was not proximity to such a young girl as Gemma worth? He would soon part from her, and, in all probability, forever; but while one and the same bark

bears them along the calmed floods of life, as in Uhland's romance—rejoice, enjoy thyself, O traveller! And everything seemed pleasant and charming to the happy voyager. Frau Lenore proposed that he should contend with her and Pantaleone at "tresette," taught him that far from complicated Italian game of cards—won a few kreutzers from him—and he was greatly pleased. Pantaleone, at the request of Émile, made the poodle Tartaglia to go through all his tricks—and Tartaglia leaped over a stick, "talked," that is to say, barked, sneezed, shut the door with his nose, fetched the patched slipper of his master,—and, to wind up, with an old shako on his head, represented Marshal Bernadotte, subjected to the harsh reproofs of the Emperor Napoleon for his treachery. Pantaleone, of course, represented Napoleon—and represented him very faithfully. He folded his arms on his chest, pulled a three-cornered hat down over his eyes—and spoke roughly and sharply, in French; but, O heavens, in *what* French! Tartaglia sat up in front of his commander, all shrivelled up, with his tail tucked between his legs, and winking and screwing up his eyes confusedly under the visor of the shako, which was on awry. From time to time, when Napoleon raised his voice, Bernadotte rose on his hind legs. *"Fuori, traditore!"* shouted Napoleon, at last, forgetting, in the excess of his indignation, that he ought to

preserve his French character to the end—and Bernadotte dashed headlong under the divan, but immediately sprang out again, with a joyful bark, as though giving it to be understood that the performance was at an end. All the spectators laughed a great deal—and Sánin most of all.

Gemma had a peculiarly charming, incessant, quiet laugh, interspersed with very amusing little squeaks. . . . Sánin fairly went to pieces under that laugh—he would have liked to kiss her, for those squeaks!

Night came at last. One must not abuse kindness! After bidding them all good night several times, after saying several times to all of them: "Farewell until to-morrow!" (he even exchanged kisses with Émile), Sánin wended his way homeward, and carried with him the image of the young girl, now laughing, now pensive, now composed, and even indifferent—but always fascinating! Her eyes, now widely-opened and bright and joyous as the day, again half-veiled by her lashes, and deep, and dark as night, fairly stood before his eyes, strangely and sweetly piercing through all other images and scenes.

Of Herr Klüber, of the cause which had moved him to linger in Frankfurt—in a word, of all that which had agitated him on the preceding day—he did not think even once.

XIV

But we must say a few words about Sánin himself.

In the first place, he was very, very far from being bad-looking. A stately, slender figure, agreeable, rather formless features, small caressing blue eyes, golden hair, a white-and-red complexion—chief of all, that artlessly-merry, confiding, frank expression, rather stupid at first sight, by which, in times gone by, it was possible instantly to recognise the children of dignified noble families, "father's" sons, nice young lordlings, born and fattened in our spacious, half-steppe regions;—a walk with a hitch, a voice with a lisp, a smile like that of a child, as soon as one glances at it. . . . In conclusion, freshness, health—and softness, softness, softness,—there you have Sánin complete. And in the second place, he was not stupid, and had acquired a few things. He remained fresh, notwithstanding his trip abroad. The agitated emotions, which tossed with storm the best part of the youth of that day, were little known to him.

Of late, in our literature, after the vain search for "new men," people have begun to depict youths who have made up their minds, cost what it may, to remain fresh . . . . fresh as Flens-

burg oysters imported to St. Petersburg. . . . Sánin did not resemble them. And, as long as it has become a question of comparisons, he reminded one, rather, of a bushy young apple-tree, recently planted in our black-earth orchards,—or, better still, of a well-groomed, smooth, thick-legged, tender three-year-old of former "gentlemen's" stud-farms, whom they have just begun to lead with a thong. . . . Those who came in contact with Sánin later on, when life had thoroughly broken him in, and the young, fleeting plumpness had long since worked off of him, beheld in him a totally different man.

On the following day, Sánin was still in bed, when Émile, in holiday attire, with a slender cane in his hand, and heavily pomaded, burst into his room, and announced that Herr Klüber would be there directly with a carriage, and that the weather promised to be wonderfully fine, that they already had everything in readiness, but that mamma would not go, because her head was aching again. He began to urge Sánin to haste, assuring him that he had not a minute to lose. . . . And, in fact, Herr Klüber found Sánin still busy with his toilet. He knocked at the door, entered, bowed, inclined his body, expressed a readiness to wait as long as he liked —and sat down, with his hat resting elegantly against his knee. The good-looking clerk had

dressed himself foppishly and scented himself to excess; his every movement was accompanied by an augmented billow of the most delicate perfume. He had arrived in a commodious, open carriage, a so-called landau, drawn by two powerful and well-grown, though not handsome horses. A quarter of an hour later, Sánin, Klüber, and Émile drove up triumphantly, in that same carriage, to the door of the confectionery shop. Signora Roselli positively refused to take part in the excursion; Gemma wished to remain with her mother; but the latter drove her out, as the saying is.

"I want no one,"—she asserted. "I am going to sleep. I would send Pantaleone with you,"—she added,—"but there would be no one left to tend the shop."

"May we take Tartaglia?"—asked Émile.

"Certainly you may."

Tartaglia immediately, with joyful efforts, clambered up onto the box and seated himself, licking his chops. Evidently, he was used to it. Gemma donned a large straw hat with light-brown ribbons; this hat was bent down in front, shading nearly the whole of her face from the sun. The line of shadow was drawn just above her lips. They glowed virginally and tenderly, like the petals of a hundred-leaved rose, and her teeth gleamed out by stealth—also innocently, as with children. Gemma installed herself on

the back seat, beside Sánin; Klüber and Émile seated themselves opposite. Frau Lenore's pale face showed itself at the window, Gemma waved her handkerchief at it—and the horses started.

XV

Soden is a small town, half an hour's journey from Frankfurt. It lies in a beautiful situation, on the foot-hills of the Taunus range, and is known to us, in Russia, for its waters, which are supposed to be good for people with weak chests. Frankfurters resort thither chiefly for diversion, as Soden possesses a fine park and various *Wirthschaften,* where beer and coffee can be drunk under the shade of lofty lindens and maples. The road from Frankfurt to Soden runs along the right bank of the Main, and is planted throughout with fruit-trees. While the carriage was rolling gently along the excellent highway, Sánin stealthily watched Gemma's behaviour to her betrothed. He saw them together for the first time. *She* bore herself with composure and simplicity—but was somewhat more reserved and serious than usual. *He* had the gaze of a condescending superior, who was permitting himself and his subordinates a modest and discreet pleasure. Sánin observed no special attentions to Gemma, nothing of that which the French call *empressement,* on his

part. It was evident that Herr Klüber considered that the matter was settled, and, therefore, there was no cause for bothering himself or getting agitated. But his condescension did not abandon him for a single moment! Even during the long stroll before dinner, over the wooded hills and valleys behind Soden, even while enjoying the beauties of nature, he bore himself toward it, that same nature, ever with the same condescension, through which, from time to time, his wonted sternness of a superior broke forth. Thus, for example, he remarked about one brook that it ran too straight through the hollow, instead of making a few picturesque turns; neither did he approve of the conduct of one bird—a chaffinch, which did not introduce enough variations into its song. Gemma was not bored, and even, to all appearances, was pleased; but Sánin did not recognise in her the former Gemma: not that a shadow had come over her—her beauty had never been more radiant than now—but her soul had retreated into itself, within her. Opening her parasol, and leaving her gloves buttoned, she walked on sedately, without haste,—as well-trained young girls do—and said little. Émile also felt constrained, much more so Sánin. Among other things, he was somewhat embarrassed by the circumstance that the conversation was conducted uninterruptedly in the German lan-

guage. Tartaglia was the only one who was not depressed! With wild barking, he dashed after the thrushes which crossed his path, leaped over gullies, stumps, water-holes; he hurled himself with a flourish into the water, and hastily lapped it up, shook himself, whined—and again bounded off like an arrow, with his red tongue lolling out on his very shoulder. Herr Klüber, on his side, did everything which he regarded as necessary for the amusement of the party. He invited them to sit down beneath the shadow of a spreading oak—and, pulling from his side-pocket a small book, entitled *"Knallersleben—oder du sollst und willst lachen!"* ("Petards—or thou must and wilt laugh"), he began to read them unconnected anecdotes, with which the little book was filled. He read them a dozen; but he aroused little mirth; Sánin alone, out of politeness, showed his teeth in a grin, and Herr Klüber himself, after every anecdote, emitted a curt, business-like—and, at the same time, condescending—laugh. At twelve o'clock, the entire party returned to Soden, to the best restaurant in the place.

The question of arranging for dinner arose.

Herr Klüber proposed that the dinner should take place in an arbour, shut in on all sides—*"im Gartensalon."* But at this point Gemma suddenly rose in rebellion, and declared that she would not dine otherwise than in the open air,

in the garden, at one of the little tables placed in front of the restaurant; that it bored her to be all the time with the same set of people, and that she wanted to see others. Groups of newly-arrived visitors were already seated at several of the tables.

While Herr Klüber condescendingly submitted to "the caprice of his betrothed," and went to confer with the head-waiter, Gemma stood motionless, with eyes cast down and lips tightly compressed. She was conscious that Sánin was gazing fixedly and interrogatively, as it were, at her—and this seemed to enrage her. At last, Herr Klüber returned, announced that dinner would be ready in half an hour, and suggested that they play at ninepins until that time; adding that that was very good for the appetite, he, he, he! He played ninepins in a masterly manner. In throwing the ball he assumed wonderfully dashing poses, made his muscles play in a foppish way, foppishly flourished and shook his leg. In his way, he was an athlete—and capitally built. And his hands were so white and handsome, and he rubbed them with such a very rich, golden-patterned India silk handkerchief!

The dinner-hour arrived—and the whole party sat down at a small table.

XVI

Who does not know what a German dinner is like? Watery soup, with knobby dumplings and cinnamon, boiled beef, dry as cork, overgrown with white fat, slimy potatoes, puffy beets and chewed horseradish, eel that has turned blue, capers and vinegar, a roast with preserves, and the inevitable *Mehlspeise,*—something in the nature of a pudding, with a sourish red sauce; and on top of all, wine and beer—capital! To just that sort of a dinner did the restaurant-keeper of Soden treat his patrons. However, the dinner itself passed off successfully. No particular animation was visible, it is true; it did not make its appearance even when Herr Klüber proposed a toast to "that which we love!" (*Was wir lieben!*) Everything was very decorous and proper. After dinner, coffee was served,—weak, rusty-red regular German coffee. Herr Klüber, like a genuine cavalier, asked Gemma's permission to light his cigar. . . . But at this point something happened which was unforeseen, and really disagreeable—and even improper!

Several officers of the Mayence garrison had placed themselves at one of the neighbouring tables. From their glances and whisperings, it was easy to divine that Gemma's beauty had

made an impression on them; one of them, who had probably been in Frankfurt before, kept staring at her, as at a face well known to him. It was obvious that he knew who she was. He suddenly rose to his feet, and glass in hand,—the officers had been drinking heavily, and the whole table-cloth in front of them was covered with bottles,—he stepped up to the table at which sat Gemma. He was a very young, fair-haired man, with sufficiently agreeable and even sympathetic features; but the wine he had drunk had distorted them; his cheeks were twitching, his swollen eyes wandered and assumed an audacious expression. At first his comrades tried to hold him back, but afterward they let him go his way, as though they were curious to see what would come of it.

Reeling slightly on his legs, the officer halted in front of Gemma, and in a violently shrill voice, in which, against his will, conflict with himself was expressed, he articulated: "I drink to the health of the most beautiful coffee-house girl in the whole world"—(he "drained" the glass at one swallow)—"and, as my reward, I take this flower, wrested from her divine little fingers!" He picked up from the table a rose, which lay in front of Gemma's plate. At first she was amazed, frightened, and turned terribly pale . . . . then her terror was replaced by indignation. She suddenly flushed all over, to her

very hair,—and her eyes, fixed straight on the offender, both darkened and blazed up simultaneously—became filled with gloom and lighted up with the fire of uncontrollable wrath. This gaze must have abashed the officer; he muttered something unintelligible, bowed—and went back to his friends. They greeted him with laughter, and a faint clapping of hands.

Herr Klüber suddenly rose from his chair, and drawing himself up to his full height, and putting on his hat, he said, with dignity, but not too loudly: "This is unheard of! Unheard-of insolence!" (*"Unerhört! Unerhörte Frechheit!"*) and immediately calling the waiter to him, in a stern voice, he demanded his bill instantly . . . . and that was not all: he ordered the carriage to be harnessed, adding that respectable people could not come to the house, as they were subjected to insults! At these words, Gemma, who had continued to sit still in her place, without moving,—her bosom heaved sharply and high,—Gemma turned her eyes on Herr Klüber . . . and regarded him steadily, and with the same gaze which she had used for the officer. Émile was simply quivering with fury.

"Rise, *mein Fräulein,*"—said Herr Klüber, still with the same severity; "it is not proper for you to remain here. We will post ourselves yonder in the restaurant."

Gemma rose in silence. He offered her his arm in a crook, she gave him hers—and he wended his way to the restaurant with a majestic stride, which, equally with his bearing, became more majestic and arrogant in proportion as he got further away from the spot where the dinner had taken place. Poor Émile slunk after them.

But while Herr Klüber was settling the bill with the waiter, to whom, by way of punishment, he gave not a single kreutzer of tip, Sánin, with swift strides, approached the table at which the officers sat,—and, addressing Gemma's insulter (at the moment the latter was allowing each of his comrades in turn to smell of her rose) —he articulated distinctly, in French:—"What you have just done, my dear sir, is unworthy of an honourable man, unworthy of the uniform you wear,—and I have come to tell you that you are an ill-bred bully!"—The young man sprang to his feet, but another officer, an older man, restrained him by a motion of his hand, made him sit down,—and, turning to Sánin, asked him, also in French:—"Was he a relative, a brother, or the betrothed of that young girl?"

"I am an entire stranger to her,"—exclaimed Sánin,—"I am a Russian,—but I cannot look on, with indifference, at such a piece of insolence. However, here is my card, with my address; the officer can look me up."

As he uttered these words, Sánin flung on the

table his visiting-card, and, at the same time, quickly seized Gemma's rose, which one of the officers seated at the table had dropped on his plate. The young man again tried to spring from his chair, but again his comrade held him back, saying: "Dönhof, be quiet!" (*"Dönhof, sei still!"*) Then he rose himself,—and, touching the visor of his cap with his hand, he said to Sánin, not without a trace of respect in his manner and voice, that the next morning one of the officers of the regiment would have the honour to present himself to him at his lodgings. Sánin replied by a curt nod—and hastily rejoined his friends.

Herr Klüber feigned not to notice in the least either Sánin's absence, or his explanation with the officers; he urged to haste the coachman, who was harnessing the horses, and flew into a violent rage at his slowness. Neither did Gemma say anything to Sánin, she did not even glance at him; but her lowering brows, her lips, which were pale and compressed, her very immobility made it plain that her mind was not at ease. Émile alone wanted to talk with Sánin, wanted to question him. He had seen Sánin go up to the officers, he had seen him give them something white,—a scrap of paper, a note, a card. . . . The poor lad's heart beat violently, he was ready to fling himself on Sánin's neck, ready to weep,

or to go on the instant with him to pulverise all those disgusting officers! But he restrained himself, and contented himself with watching attentively every movement of his noble Russian friend.

At last the coachman got the horses put to; the whole party took their seats in the carriage. Émile climbed up after Tartaglia on the box; he felt more at his ease there, and, moreover, Klüber, whom he could not look at with equanimity, would not be before his eyes.

All the way home, Herr Klüber harangued . . . and harangued alone; no one, no one answered him, and no one agreed with him. He laid particular stress on the fact that they had made a mistake not to obey him when he had proposed to dine in the enclosed arbour. Had that been done, no unpleasantness would have arisen! Then he pronounced several harsh, and even liberal judgments, to the effect that the government upheld the officers in an unpardonable manner, did not look after their discipline, and did not sufficiently respect the civilian element of society—(*"das bürgerliche Element in der Societät!"*)—and that thence, from that cause, arose dissatisfaction, from which to revolution was not a long stride, as to which a sad example (here he sighed feelingly, but sternly)—a sad example had been furnished by France! But he

immediately added that, personally, he revered the authorities, and never . . . . never! . . . . would become a revolutionist—although he could not refrain from expressing his . . . . disapprobation at the sight of such profligacy! Then he added a few more general remarks as to morality and immorality, propriety and the sense of dignity.

In the course of all these "harangues" Gemma, who already, in the stroll which had preceded the dinner, had seemed to be not entirely pleased with Herr Klüber—hence, she had held herself somewhat aloof from Sánin, and had seemed to be embarrassed by his presence—Gemma began, plainly, to feel ashamed of her betrothed! Toward the end of the drive she positively suffered, and although, as before, she did not converse with Sánin, yet she suddenly cast an imploring glance at him. . . . He, on his part, felt much more pity for her than indignation at Herr Klüber; he even secretly, half unconsciously, rejoiced at all that had happened in the course of the day, although he might expect a challenge to a duel the next morning.

This painful *partie de plaisir* came to an end at last. As Sánin helped Gemma out of the carriage in front of the confectionery shop, he placed the rose, which he had recaptured, in her hand, without saying a word. She flushed all over, pressed his hand, and instantly con-

cealed the rose. He did not wish to enter the house, although the evening was only just beginning. She herself did not invite him. Moreover, Pantaleone, who made his appearance on the steps, announced that Frau Lenore was sleeping. Émile bade Sánin a timid farewell; he seemed to be afraid of him: he had astonished him so much. Klüber drove Sánin to his lodgings, and took leave of him conceitedly. The regularly constituted German, despite all his self-confidence, felt awkward. They all felt awkward.

But, in Sánin's case, this feeling—the feeling of awkwardness—was speedily dissipated. It was supplanted by an ill-defined, but agreeable, even exalted mood. He paced up and down his chamber, would not allow himself to think of anything, whistled—and was very well satisfied with himself.

XVII

"I SHALL wait for the officer with an explanation until ten o'clock in the morning,"—he reflected, on the following morning, as he completed his toilet, "and then he may hunt me up!" But Germans are early risers. Before the clock struck nine, a waiter announced to Sánin that Mr. Second Lieutenant (*der Herr Seconde Lieutenant*) von Richter desired to see him. Sánin briskly

donned his coat, and said, "Show him in." Contrary to Sánin's expectation, Herr Richter proved to be a very young man, almost a boy. He endeavoured to impart an expression of importance to his beardless face,—but in this he was utterly unsuccessful; he was not able to conceal his agitation—and, as he seated himself on a chair, he nearly fell, through having entangled himself with his sword. Halting and stammering, he informed Sánin, in villainous French, that he had come on behalf of his friend, Baron von Dönhof; that he was commissioned to demand from Herr von Zanin an apology for the insulting expressions employed by him on the preceding day; and that, in case of a refusal on the part of Herr von Zanin, Baron von Dönhof desired satisfaction. Sánin replied that he had no intention of apologising, and was ready to give satisfaction. Then Herr von Richter, still stammering, inquired with whom, and at what hour, and in what place, he should hold the requisite conference? Sánin answered that he might come to him a couple of hours hence, and that he, Sánin, would endeavour to hunt up a second before that time. ("Whom the devil shall I get for a second?" he said to himself the while.) Herr von Richter rose, and began to bow himself out . . . . but halted on the threshold, as though he felt the pangs of conscience,—and, turning to Sánin, he observed that his

friend, Baron von Dönhof, did not conceal from himself . . . . a certain degree . . . . of blame on his own side for what had taken place on the previous day—and, therefore, would be content with a light apology—*"des exghizes léchères."* To this Sánin replied that he had no intention of making any sort of apology whatsoever, either heavy or light, as he did not consider himself in the wrong.—"In that case,"—returned Herr von Richter, blushing still more furiously:—"you must exchange friendly shots—*des goups de pisdolet à l'aimaple!"*

"I utterly fail to comprehend that,"—remarked Sánin. "Do you mean that we are to fire into the air?"

"Oh, not that, not so,"—lisped the sub-lieutenant, definitively overwhelmed with confusion, —"but I—I assume that, as the affair is between two gentlemen of breeding . . . . I will discuss it with your second," . . he interrupted himself, and withdrew.

Sánin dropped on a chair, as soon as the man had left the room, and fixed his eyes on the floor. —"What 's the meaning of this? How comes it that life has suddenly taken such a turn? All the past, all the future has suddenly retreated into the background, vanished—and nothing remains, save the fact that I am going to fight in Frankfurt with some one about something." He

recalled a crazy aunt of his, who had been in the habit of dancing and singing:

"Sub-lieutenant!
My darling!
My little love!
Dance a while with me, my dear!"[1]

And he burst out laughing and sang, like her: "Sub-lieutenant! dance a while with me, my dear!"—"But I must act, I must not lose time!"—he exclaimed aloud—jumped up, and beheld before him Pantaleone, with a note in his hand.

"I knocked several times, but you did not answer. I thought you were not at home,"—said the old man, and handed him the note.—"From Signorina Gemma."

Sánin took the note,—as the saying goes, mechanically,—broke the seal, and read it. Gemma wrote to him that she was very uneasy, because of the affair which was known to him, and wished to see him immediately.

"The signorina is uneasy,"—began Pantaleone, who was, evidently, acquainted with the contents of the note;—"she ordered me to see what you were doing, and bring you to her."

Sánin cast a glance at the old Italian—and

[1] Literally, "dear little cucumber":—"dear little dove." In Russian the rhyme is characteristic: "Podporútchik! Moi ogúrtchik! Moi amúrtchik! Proplyáshí co mnoi golúbtchik!"—Translator.

became pensive. A sudden idea had flashed through his brain. At the first moment, it seemed to him strange to the verge of impossibility. . . .

"Nevertheless . . . . why not?"—he asked himself.

"Signor Pantaleone!"—he said aloud.

The old man started, thrust his chin into his neckcloth, and riveted his eyes on Sánin.

"You know,"—pursued Sánin,—"what took place yesterday?"

Pantaleone mowed with his lips, and nodded his huge head.—"I do."

(Émile had told him all as soon as he returned.)

"Ah, you know!—Well, then, see here. An officer has just left me. That bully challenges me to a duel.—I have accepted his challenge.—But I have no second. Will *you* be my second?"

Pantaleone shuddered, and elevated his eyebrows to such a degree that they disappeared beneath his overhanging hair.

"Must you inevitably fight?"—he said at last, in Italian. Up to that moment he had been expressing himself in French.

"Inevitably. I cannot act otherwise—it would mean disgracing myself forever."

"H'm.—If I do not consent to act as your second—then you will hunt up some one else?"

"Yes . . . . without fail."

Pantaleone cast down his eyes.—"But permit me to ask you, Signor de Zannini, will not your duel cast a sort of unfavourable shadow upon the reputation of a certain person?"

"I think not; but, at any rate,—there is nothing else to be done."

"H'm!"—Pantaleone retired altogether into his neckcloth.—"Well, and that *ferrofluchto* Kluberio—what about him?"—he suddenly exclaimed, and threw up his face.

"About him? Nothing."

"*Che!*"[1]—Pantaleone shrugged his shoulders scornfully.—"In any case, I must thank you,"—he said, at last, in an uncertain voice,—"for having recognised me, in my present humble station, for a well-bred man—*un galant' uomo!*—By so doing, you have proved that you yourself are a *galant' uomo.* But I must think over your proposal."

"There is no time for that, my dear Signor Ci . . . . Cippa . . . ."

"—tóla," prompted the old man.—"I ask one hour in all for reflection.—The daughter of my benefactors is implicated in the matter. . . . And, therefore, I must—I am bound to reflect!! . . . An hour—three quarters of an hour hence, you shall know my decision."

"Good! I will wait."

[1] An untranslatable Italian expression, corresponding to "Well!"—Author's Note.

"And now . . . what answer am I to give to Signorina Gemma?"

Sánin took a sheet of paper, wrote on it: "Be not anxious, my dear friend; I will go to you three hours hence,—and everything will be explained. I thank you heartily for your sympathy,"—and handed the sheet of paper to Pantaleone.

The latter carefully placed it in his side-pocket —and repeating once more: "An hour hence!" he started toward the door; but turned back abruptly, ran up to Sánin, seized his hand,—and pressing it to his shirt-frill, and raising his eyes heavenward, exclaimed: "Noble youth! Great heart! (*Nobile giovanotto! Gran cuore!*)— permit a weak old man (*a un vecchiotto!*) to shake your valorous right hand! (*la vostra valorosa destra!*)" Then he sprang back a little way, flourished both hands in the air, and withdrew.

Sánin gazed after him . . . took up a newspaper, and began to read. But in vain did his eyes run over the lines: he understood nothing.

XVIII

An hour later, the waiter again entered Sánin's room, and handed him an old, soiled visiting-card, on which stood the following words: "Pantaleone Cippatola of Varese, Singer to the Court

(*Cantante di Camera*) of his Royal Highness the Duke of Modena,"—and following the waiter, Pantaleone presented himself in person. He had re-dressed himself from head to foot. He wore a rusty black dress-suit, and a white piqué waistcoat, over which, in curves, meandered a pinchbeck chain; a heavy carnelian seal hung low on the tight black trousers with flaps. In his right hand he held a black hat of rabbit's down; in the left, two thick chamois-leather gloves; he had tied his neckcloth still more broadly and higher up than usual—and in the ruffle of his shirt he had stuck a pin with a stone called a "cat's-eye" (*œil de chat*). On the forefinger of his right hand shone a ring, representing two clasped hands with a flaming heart between them. The old man's whole person emitted an odour of clothing long packed away,—an odour of camphor and musk; the anxious pomposity of his carriage would have struck the most indifferent spectator. Sánin rose to greet him.

"I am your second,"—said Pantaleone, in French—bowing with a forward inclination of his whole body, and his toes pointed outward, as dancers point them. "I have come for instructions. Do you wish to fight without quarter?"

"But why should it be without quarter, my dear Mr. Cippatola? Not for anything in the

world will I retract my words of yesterday—but I am not bloodthirsty! . . . . But, see here, wait a bit, my adversary's second will be here directly. I will retire into the neighbouring room, and you can come to an agreement with him. Believe me, I shall never forget your service, and I thank you with all my soul."

"Honour before everything!"—replied Pantaleone, and dropped into a chair, without waiting for Sánin to invite him to be seated. "If that *ferrofluchto spiccebubbio,*"—he remarked, exchanging the French tongue for Italian,—"if that haberdasher Kluberio was unable to understand his plain obligation, or was afraid,—so much the worse for him! . . . He 's a farthing soul—and *basta!* . . . . But as for the conditions of the duel—I am your second, and your interests are sacred for me!! . . . When I lived in Padua, a regiment of white dragoons was stationed there—and I was very intimately acquainted with many of the officers! . . . I am familiar with their whole code. Well, and I frequently conversed with your Principe Tarbusski on those questions. . . Is that second coming soon?"

"I am expecting him every moment—and yonder he comes,"—added Sánin, glancing into the street.

Pantaleone rose, looked at his watch, adjusted his top-knot, and hastily stuffed into his shoe a

tape which was dangling from beneath his trouser-leg. The young sub-lieutenant entered, as flushed and embarrassed as ever.

Sánin introduced the seconds to each other: "M-r Richter, sous-lieutenant!—M-r Zippatola, artiste!"—The lieutenant was somewhat surprised at the aspect of the old man. . . . Oh, what would he have said, had any one whispered to him, at that moment, that the "artist" introduced to him also occupied himself with the art of cookery! But Pantaleone assumed an air, as though taking part in the arrangement of duels were the most commonplace sort of event for him: probably the memories of his theatrical career helped him at that moment—and he played the part of a second, precisely like a rôle. Both he and the lieutenant remained silent for a while.

"Well? Let us proceed to business!"—Pantaleone was the first to speak, as he toyed with his carnelian seal.

"Let us proceed,"—replied the lieutenant,—"but . . . the presence of one of the combatants . . . ."

"I will leave you at once, gentlemen,"—exclaimed Sánin, and, bowing, he went into the bedroom, and shut the door after him.

He flung himself on the bed—and set to thinking about Gemma . . . but the conversation of the seconds reached his ear through the closed

door. It was proceeding in the French language; both were murdering it mercilessly, each in his own way. Pantaleone again alluded to the dragoons at Padua, to Principe Tarbusski, —the lieutenant mentioned *"exghizes léchères"* and *"goups à l'aimaple."* But the old man would not hear to any *exghizes!* To the horror of Sánin, he suddenly began to talk to his interlocutor about a certain young, innocent girl, whose little finger was worth more than all the officers in the world . . . . (*"oune zeune damigella innoucenta, qu'à sola dans soun péti doa vale piu que toutt le zouffissié del mondo!"*) and several times repeated with fervour: "It is a shame! it is a shame! (*E ouna onta, ouna onta!*)" The lieutenant did not reply to him at first; but, after a while, a wrathful tremor became audible in the young man's voice, and he remarked that he had not come for the purpose of listening to moral sentiments. . . .

"At your age it is always useful to listen to righteous remarks!"—cried Pantaleone.

The altercation between the two seconds grew stormy at several points; it lasted for more than an hour, and wound up, at last, with the following conditions: "Baron von Dönhof and Mr. da Sanin were to fight a duel, with pistols, on the following day, at ten o'clock in the morning, in the small forest near Hanau, at a distance of twenty paces; each was to have the right to

fire two shots, on a signal given by the seconds. The pistols to be without hair-trigger, and not rifled." Herr von Richter withdrew, and Pantaleone triumphantly threw open the bedroom door, and communicating the result of their conference, again exclaimed: "*Bravo Russe! Bravo giovanotto!* Thou wilt be the victor!"

A few minutes later, they both set out for the Roselli confectionery shop. Sánin exacted from Pantaleone a preliminary promise to preserve the strictest secrecy regarding the duel. In reply, the old man merely pointed his finger upward, and narrowing his eyes, he whispered twice in succession: "*Segredezza!* (Secrecy!)" He had grown visibly younger, and even stepped out more freely. All these unusual, though agreeable events had vividly carried him back to the epoch when he himself had accepted and given challenges—on the stage, it is true. Barytones, as all the world is aware, strut a great deal in their rôles.

XIX

Émile ran out to meet Sánin—he had been watching for his arrival for more than an hour—and hastily whispered in his ear that his mother knew nothing about the unpleasantness of the day before, and it was not proper even to give her a hint of it, and that he would be sent

again to the shop!! . . . . but that he would not go, but would hide somewhere or other!—Having imparted all this, in the course of a few seconds, he suddenly fell upon Sánin's neck, kissed him impulsively, and ran off down the street. In the confectionery shop Gemma greeted Sánin; she tried to say something—and could not. Her lips quivered slightly, and her eyes were narrowed and glanced off in all directions. He hastened to soothe her with the assurance that the whole affair had ended . . . in mere nonsense.

"Has no one been to see you to-day?"—she asked.

"One person has been to see me—we had an explanation—and we . . . we arrived at the most satisfactory result."

Gemma went back again behind the counter.

"She did not believe me,"—he thought . . . . but he went his way into the next room, and there found Frau Lenore.

Her headache had passed off, but she was still in a melancholy mood. She smiled cordially at him, but, at the same time, she warned him that he would find it tiresome with her that day, as she was not in a condition to entertain him.

"What ails you, Frau Lenore? Can it be that you have been weeping?"

"Sssssssh . . . ." she whispered, indicating

with a movement of her head the room where her daughter was. "Don't say that . . . . aloud."

"But what have you been crying about?"

"Akh, Monsieur Sánin, I don't know myself what it was about!"

"Has any one hurt your feelings?"

"Oh, no! . . . I felt greatly bored all of a sudden. I remembered Giovan' Battista . . . . his youth. . . . Then that all went away again speedily. I am getting old, my friend. I seem to be just the same as ever myself . . . . but old age—there it is . . . there it is!"—Tears made their appearance in Frau Lenore's eyes.—"I see that you look at me in amazement. . . . But you will grow old also, my friend, and you will find out how bitter it is!"

Sánin set to work to comfort her, reminding her of her children, with whom her own youth had come to life again; he even attempted to laugh at her, asserting that she was fishing for compliments . . . . but she, not in jest, requested him "to stop," and then, for the first time, he was able to convince himself that that sort of sadness, the sadness of conscious old age, cannot in any way be cheered or dissipated; one must wait for it to disperse of itself. He proposed to her a game of tresette—and he could not have hit upon anything better. She immediately accepted—and seemed to brighten up.

Sánin played with her until dinner, and after

dinner. Pantaleone also took an interest in the game. Never had his crest of hair fallen so low upon his brow, never had his chin sunk so deeply into his neckcloth! His every movement exhaled such concentrated dignity that the sight of him involuntarily prompted the thought: What secret is that man keeping with so much firmness?

But—*segredezza! segredezza!*

Throughout the whole course of that day, he endeavoured, in every possible way, to show Sánin the most profound respect; at table, passing over the ladies, solemnly and with decision, he offered the viands first to Sánin; during the game at cards, he surrendered his draw to him, did not venture to beat him; he declared, without any rhyme or reason, that Russians are the most magnanimous, brave, and resolute nation in the world!

"Akh, thou old play-actor!"—thought Sánin to himself.

And he was not so much surprised at Signora Roselli's unexpected frame of mind, as at the way in which her daughter treated him. It was not that she shunned him . . . . on the contrary, she kept constantly seating herself at a short distance from him, listening to his remarks, gazing at him; but she positively declined to enter into conversation with him, and just as soon as he addressed her, she rose quietly from her seat, and quietly withdrew for a few moments. Then she

made her appearance again, and again seated herself somewhere in a corner—and sat there motionless, as though meditating and bewildered—bewildered, most of all. Frau Lenore herself noticed, at last, the unwontedness of her behaviour, and asked her a couple of times what was the matter with her.

"Nothing,"—replied Gemma; "thou knowest that I am like this at times."

"That is true,"—assented her mother.

Thus passed the whole of that long day, in a way that was neither animated nor languid,—neither cheerful nor tiresome. Had Gemma borne herself otherwise, Sánin might—who knows?—have been unable to resist the temptation to strut a little, or might have yielded to the feeling of sadness in face of a parting which might prove eternal. . . . But, as he never succeeded, even once, in speaking to Gemma, he was obliged to content himself with striking minor chords on the piano for a quarter of an hour before evening coffee was served.

Émile came home late, and with the object of avoiding interrogations on the subject of Herr Klüber, he retired very soon. Sánin's turn to withdraw arrived.

He began to take leave of Gemma. For some reason, Lénsky's parting from Olga, in "Onyégin,"[1] recurred to his mind. He pressed her

[1] Púshkin's poem "Evgény Onyégin."—Translator.

hand closely—and tried to look into her face—but she turned away slightly and freed her fingers.

XX

The sky was studded with stars when he emerged on the steps. And how many of those stars were sown there, big, little, yellow, red, blue, white! They were all fairly glowing and swarming, vying with one another in darting their rays. There was no moon in the sky, but even without it every object was distinctly visible in the half-light, shadeless gloom. Sánin walked down the street, to the very end. . . He did not wish to return home at once; he felt the need of roaming about in the fresh air. He turned back—and before he had got opposite the house in which the Roselli confectionery shop was located, one of the windows which gave on the street suddenly rattled and opened—in its black square (there was no light in the room) a woman's form appeared—and he heard himself called by name.

"Monsieur Dimítri!"

He instantly flew to the window. . . . Gemma!

She leaned her elbows on the sill, and bent forward.

"Monsieur Dimítri,"—she began, in a cautious voice,—"all day long, to-day, I have

wanted to give you a certain thing . . . . but could not make up my mind; and seeing you unexpectedly again, I thought, evidently, so it is decreed by fate. . . ."

Gemma involuntarily paused on that word. She could not go on; something remarkable occurred at that moment.

Suddenly, in the midst of the deep silence, athwart the perfectly cloudless sky swept such a gust of wind, that the very earth seemed to tremble under foot, the delicate starlight quivered and rippled, the very air rolled up into a ball. The whirlwind, not cold, but warm, even sultry, beat upon the trees, upon the roof of the house, on its walls, on the street; it instantly tore the hat from Sánin's head, ruffled and whirled about Gemma's black curls. Sánin's head was on a level with the window-sill; he involuntarily leaned against it—and Gemma, with both hands, clutched at his shoulder, and fell with her breast against his head. The uproar, ringing and rattling, lasted for about a minute. . . . Like a flock of huge birds, the joyously swirling whirlwind dashed past. . . Profound silence reigned once more.

Sánin raised himself, and beheld above him such a wondrous, frightened, excited face, such huge, magnificent eyes—he beheld such a beauty, that his heart sank within him, he pressed his lips to a slender lock of hair, which fell over his

breast—and could say nothing except: "Oh, Gemma!"

"What was that? Lightning?"—she asked, rolling her eyes widely around, and not removing her bare arms from his shoulders.

"Gemma!"—repeated Sánin.

She sighed, cast a glance behind her into the room,—and with a swift movement drawing from her bodice an already withered rose, she tossed it to Sánin.

"I wanted to give you this flower. . . ."

He recognised the rose which he had captured the day before. . . .

But the little window had already slammed to, and behind the dark panes nothing was visible, there was no gleam of white. . . .

Sánin reached home without a hat. . . . He did not even notice that he had lost it.

XXI

He fell asleep just before dawn. And it is not surprising! Under the shock of that sudden summer whirlwind, he had instantaneously felt—not precisely that Gemma was a beauty, not precisely that he liked her—he had known that before . . . . but that he had all but fallen in love with her! Love had descended upon him as instantaneously as that whirlwind. And there was that stupid duel! Melancholy forebodings began

to torture him. Well, assuming that he were not killed. . . What could come of his love for that young girl, for the betrothed bride of another man? Assuming, even, that that "other" was not dangerous to him, that Gemma herself would fall in love with him or had already fallen in love with him. . . . What of that? What then? Such a beauty! . . . .

He paced the room, seated himself at the table, took a sheet of paper, scribbled a few lines on it —and immediately crossed them out. . . . He recalled to mind Gemma's wonderful figure, in the dark window, beneath the rays of the stars, all fluttering in the warm gale; he recalled her marble arms, like the arms of Olympian goddesses; he felt their living burden upon his shoulders. . . . Then he picked up the rose which had been tossed to him—it seemed to him that its half-withered petals exhaled another and still more delicate perfume than the ordinary fragrance of roses. . . .

"And suppose he were to be killed or maimed?"

He did not lie down on his bed, but fell asleep, fully dressed, on the couch. Some one tapped him on the shoulder. . . .

He opened his eyes, and beheld Pantaleone.

"He sleeps like Alexander of Macedon on the eve of the battle of Babylon!"—exclaimed the old man.

"Why, what o'clock is it?"—asked Sánin.

"A quarter to seven; it is a two hours' drive to Hanau, and we should be the first on the ground. Russians always forestall the enemy! I have hired the best carriage in Frankfurt!"

Sánin began to wash himself.—"And where are the pistols?"

"That *ferrofluchto Tedesco* will bring the pistols. And he will bring a doctor also."

Pantaleone had, evidently, summoned up his courage, as on the preceding day; but when he seated himself in the carriage with Sánin, when the coachman cracked his whip, and the horses set out at a gallop,—a sudden change came over the former singer and friend of the Padua dragoons. He grew confused, and even turned coward. Something seemed to fall to ruin within him, like a badly constructed wall.

"But what is this we are doing, my God, Santissima Madonna!"—he exclaimed, in an unexpectedly squeaking voice, and clutched his hair. "What am I about, old fool, madman, *frenetico* that I am!"

Sánin was amazed, and burst out laughing; and lightly embracing Pantaleone's waist, he reminded him of the French maxim: "*Le vin est tiré—il faut le boire.*"

"Yes, yes,"—replied the old man;—"you and I are to drain that cup together,—and, nevertheless, I am a lunatic! I'm a lunatic! Everything

was so quiet, so nice . . . . and all of a sudden: ta-ta-ta, tra-ta-ta!"

"Just like the *tutti* in an orchestra,"—remarked Sánin, with a forced smile. "But you are not to blame."

"I know that I am not! I should think not! Nevertheless, this is . . . . such an unbridled proceeding. *Diavolo! Diavolo!*"—repeated Pantaleone, shaking his crest of hair and heaving a sigh.

But still the carriage rolled on and on.

It was a delightful morning. The streets of Frankfurt, which were barely beginning to grow animated, seemed so clean and comfortable; the windows of the houses shone with glinting reflections, like tinsel; and as soon as the carriage had emerged beyond the city barrier the loud trills of the larks fairly showered down from on high, from the sky which was not yet bright. All at once, at a turn in the highway, from behind a lofty poplar-tree a familiar form made its appearance, advanced a few paces, and came to a halt. Sánin scrutinised it. . . . Great heavens! Émile!

"Does he know anything about this?"—he asked Pantaleone.

"I have already told you that I am a lunatic,"—roared the poor Italian, in despair, almost in a yell.—"That unfortunate lad gave me no peace all night—and at last, this morning, I revealed everything to him!"

"There 's *segredezza* for you!" thought Sánin.

The carriage came even with Émile. Sánin ordered the coachman to stop the horses, and called the "unfortunate lad" to him. Émile approached with irresolute steps, pale—pale as on the day of his fit. He could hardly keep his feet.

"What are you doing here?"—Sánin asked him, sternly;—"why are you not at home?"

"Permit me . . . . permit me to go with you,"—faltered Émile, in a trembling voice, as he clasped his hands. His teeth chattered, as in a fever. "I will not get in your way—only take me!"

"If you feel the smallest iota of attachment for me,"—said Sánin,—"you will instantly return home, or to Herr Klüber's shop, and you will not say a single word to any one, and you will await my return!"

"Your return,"—groaned Émile—and his voice jangled and broke. "But if you . . . ."

"Émile!"—Sánin interrupted him—and indicated the coachman with his eyes,—"come to your senses! Émile, please go home! Listen to me, my friend! You assert that you love me. Well, then I entreat you."

He offered him his hand. Émile swayed forward, gulped down a sob, pressed it to his lips—and springing out of the road, ran back to Frankfurt, across the fields.

"That 's a noble heart also,"—muttered Pantaleone; but Sánin glared grimly at him. . . .

The old man cuddled up in a corner of the carriage. He recognised his fault; but, in addition to that, with every passing moment he grew more and more amazed. Could it be that *he* had really constituted himself a second, and that *he* had got horses, and made all the arrangements, and had quitted his peaceful habitation at six o'clock in the morning? Moreover, his legs had begun to ache and throb.

Sánin considered it necessary to restore his courage—and hit the nail on the head, found the proper remark.

"What has become of your former spirit, respected Signor Cippatola? Where is *il antico valor?*"

Signor Cippatola straightened himself up, and frowned.

"*Il antico valor?*"—he proclaimed, in a bass voice. "*Non è ancora spento*—(It is not yet all exhausted)—*il antico valor!!*"

He assumed an air of dignity, began to talk about his career, about the opera, about the great tenor Garcia—and arrived at Hanau a valiant man. When you come to think of it, there is nothing in the world more potent—and more impotent—than words!

XXII

The little wood in which the conflict was to take place was situated a quarter of a mile from Hanau. Sánin and Pantaleone were the first to arrive, as the latter had predicted; they ordered the carriage to wait at the edge of the forest, and plunged into the shadow of the tolerably thick and dense trees. They were obliged to wait about an hour.

But the waiting did not seem particularly oppressive to Sánin; he walked to and fro along the path, lent an ear to the singing of the birds, watched the dragon-flies flitting past, and, like the majority of Russians under such circumstances, tried not to think. Once, only, did pensiveness descend upon him. He chanced upon a young linden-tree, broken off, in all probability, by the squall of the preceding day. It was completely dead . . . . all the leaves on it were dead. "What is this? An omen?" flashed through his mind. But he immediately began to whistle, jumped over that linden-tree, and strode along the path. Pantaleone growled, cursed the Germans, grunted, scratched now his back, now his knees. He even yawned with emotion, which imparted a very droll expression to his tiny, puckered face. Sánin almost roared with laughter as he looked at him.

At last the rumble of wheels on the smooth road became audible.—"'T is they!"—said Pantaleone, growing alert, and drew himself up, not without a momentary, nervous shudder, which, however, he hastened to mask with the exclamation: "br-r-r-r!" and the remark that the morning was decidedly chilly. An abundance of dew flooded the grass and the foliage, but the sultry heat had already made its way even into the forest.

Both officers speedily made their appearance beneath its arches; they were accompanied by a short, plump man with a phlegmatic, almost sleepy face—the military doctor. He carried in one hand an earthen vessel of water—on the chance of its being required; a bag, with surgical instruments and bandages, dangled over his left shoulder. It was evident that he had grown used, to an extreme degree, to such excursions; they constituted one of his sources of revenue; every duel brought him in eight ducats —four from each of the belligerent parties. Herr von Richter carried a case with pistols; Herr von Dönhof was twirling in his hand—probably for the "chic" of it— a small riding-whip.

"Pantaleone!"—whispered Sánin to the old man,—"if . . . . if I am killed—anything may happen—get a paper out of my side-pocket, with the flower that is wrapped in it,—and give the

paper to Signorina Gemma. Do you hear? Do you promise?"

The old man cast a dejected glance at him—and nodded his head affirmatively. . . . But God knows whether he understood what Sánin asked him.

The antagonists and seconds exchanged bows, as is customary; the doctor, alone, did not move so much as an eyebrow—and seated himself, with a yawn, on the grass, as much as to say: "I don't feel in the mood for displaying chivalrous politeness." Herr von Richter proposed to Signor "Tshibadola" that he should select the place; Signor "Tshibadola" replied, wagging his tongue feebly (the wall inside him had crumbled down again), something to this effect: "Do you act, my dear sir, and I will watch. . . ."

And Herr von Richter began to act. He searched out, there in the little wood, a very nice little glade, all dotted with flowers; he paced off the distance, marked the two extreme limits with hastily sharpened little sticks, took the pistols out of the case, and squatting down on his heels, he rammed in the bullets. In a word, he toiled and laboured with all his might, incessantly mopping his perspiring face with a white handkerchief. Pantaleone, who accompanied him, more resembled a frozen man. While all these preparations were in progress, the two antagonists stood aloof,

reminding one of two chastised school-boys who are pouting at their tutors.

The decisive moment arrived. . . .

Each took his pistol. . . .

But at this point Herr von Richter remarked to Pantaleone, that, according to the rules of duelling, it was his place, as the elder of the seconds, before pronouncing the fatal: "One! two! three!" to address to the combatants a final counsel and proposition that they become reconciled; that, although that proposition never had any result, and was, in general, nothing but an empty formality, still, by complying with that formality, Signor Cippatola would remove from his own shoulders a certain amount of responsibility; that, to tell the truth, such an allocution constituted a direct obligation of the so-called "impartial witness" (*unpartheiischer Zeuge*)—but, as they had no such witness, he, Herr von Richter, gladly resigned that privilege to his respected colleague. Pantaleone, who had already managed to hide himself behind a bush, so that he might not see the offending officer at all, did not, at first, understand a word of Herr von Richter's speech, —the more so, as it was uttered through the nose; but he suddenly gave a start, stepped briskly forward, and beating his breast convulsively with his hands, he roared out, with a hoarse voice, in his mixed dialect: *"A la la la . . . . Che bestialità! Deux zeun'ommes comme ça qué si*

battono—perché? Che diavolo? Andate a casa!"

"I do not agree to a reconciliation,"—said Sánin, hastily.

"Neither do I agree,"—repeated his adversary after him.

"Well, then, shout: 'One, two, three!'" said Herr von Richter, turning to the disconcerted Pantaleone.

The latter immediately dived into the bush again—and thence shouted out, all curled up, and with his eyes tightly closed, and his head turned away, but at the top of his lungs: "*Una . . . . due . . . . e tre!*"

Sánin shot first—and missed. His bullet rattled against a tree. Baron Dönhof fired immediately after him—intentionally to one side, and in the air.

A strained silence ensued. . . . No one stirred from his place. Pantaleone uttered a faint exclamation.

"Do you wish to continue?"—said Dönhof.

"Why did you fire into the air?"—asked Sánin.

"That is no business of yours."

"Are you going to fire into the air a second time?"—asked Sánin again.

"Perhaps so; I don't know."

"Permit me, permit me, gentlemen . . . ." began von Richter;—"the duellists have no right

to talk to each other. That is entirely out of order."

"I renounce my shot,"—said Sánin, flinging his pistol on the ground.

"And I, also, have no intention of continuing the duel,"—exclaimed Dönhof, also flinging away his pistol. "Yes, and more than that, I am now ready to admit that I was not in the right—day before yesterday."

He fidgeted about where he stood, and put out his hand, in an undecided way.

Sánin swiftly approached him,—and shook it. The two young men looked at each other smilingly,—and the faces of both flushed crimson.

"*Bravi! bravi!*"—suddenly roared Pantaleone, like a madman—and, clapping his hands, he rushed head over heels out of the bush; and the doctor, who had seated himself on one side, upon a felled tree, immediately rose, poured the water out of the jug—and walked off, lazily swaying his hips, to the edge of the forest.

"Honour is satisfied—and the duel is at an end!"—proclaimed Herr von Richter.

"*Fuori!*"—again shouted Pantaleone, from force of ancient habit.

After having exchanged salutes with the officers, and taken his seat once more in the carriage, Sánin, truth to tell, felt in all his being, if not satisfaction, at least a certain lightness, as after

an operation has been undergone; but another feeling, akin to shame, was beginning to stir within him. . . . The duel in which he had just taken part appeared to him a falsehood, a previously agreed-upon, official, commonplace student's jest. He recalled the phlegmatic doctor, he recalled how he had smiled—that is to say, had wrinkled up his nose—when he beheld him emerge from the wood almost arm-in-arm with Baron Dönhof. And then, when Pantaleone had paid over to that same doctor the four ducats which were his due—ekh! something was wrong!

Yes, Sánin was somewhat conscience-stricken and mortified . . . . although, on the other hand, what else was there for him to do? He could not have left unchastised the insolence of the young officer, he could not have imitated Herr Klüber? He had stood up for Gemma, he had defended her. . . . That was so; but, nevertheless, his soul ached, and he was conscience-stricken, and even mortified.

On the other hand, Pantaleone—simply triumphed! Pride had suddenly taken possession of him. A victorious general, returning from the field of battle won by him, could not have gazed about him with greater self-satisfaction. Sánin's behaviour during the duel had filled him with rapture. He lauded him for a hero—and would not listen to his exhortations and even entreaties. He compared him to a monument of

marble, or even of bronze—to the statue of the Commander in "Don Giovanni!" As for himself, he admitted that he had felt some consternation;—"but I 'm an artist, you see,"—he remarked,—"I have a nervous nature, but you are a son of the snows and granite cliffs."

Sánin positively did not know how to put a stopper on the artist, who had mounted his high horse.

Almost at the identical point on the road where they had found Émile a couple of hours before, he again sprang out from behind a tree, and with a joyful cry on his lips, waving his cap over his head, and skipping and leaping, he rushed straight at the carriage, came near falling under the wheels, and without waiting for the horses to come to a halt, clambered over the closed door and fairly feasted his eyes on Sánin.

"You are alive, you are not wounded!"—he kept repeating. "Forgive me, I did not obey you, I did not return to Frankfurt. . . . I could not! I waited for you here. . . . Tell me how it went off—you . . . . did you kill him?"

With difficulty Sánin quieted Émile, and made him seat himself.

With much verbosity, with evident satisfaction, Pantaleone communicated to him all the details of the duel, and, of course, did not fail to mention the monument of bronze, the statue of

the Commander! He even rose from his seat, and straddling his legs apart to preserve his equilibrium, folding his arms on his chest, and casting glances of scorn over his shoulder—he presented a visible image of Commander Sánin! Émile listened with reverence, now and then interrupting the narration by an exclamation, or hastily rising half-way, and as hastily kissing his heroic friend.

The carriage-wheels rattled on the pavements of Frankfurt—and halted, at last, in front of the hotel in which Sánin dwelt.

Escorted by his two fellow-travellers, he was mounting the stairs to the second story, when, suddenly, from a dark, narrow corridor, a woman emerged with hasty steps; her face was covered with a veil; she halted in front of Sánin, reeled slightly, gave a palpitating sigh, and immediately ran down-stairs to the street—and vanished, to the great amazement of the waiter, who announced that "that lady had been awaiting the return of Monsieur the Foreigner for more than an hour past." Momentary as was her appearance, Sánin succeeded in recognising her as Gemma. He recognised her eyes, beneath the thick silk veil, light brown in hue.

"Did Fräulein Gemma know . . ." he said slowly, in a voice of displeasure, addressing himself in German to Émile and Pantaleone, who were following on his heels.

Émile flushed scarlet and grew confused.

"I was forced to tell her everything,"—he stammered,—"she guessed it—and I could not possibly. . . . But that is of no consequence now, you see,"—he caught himself up with vivacity,—"everything turned out so well, and she has seen you safe and uninjured!"

Sánin turned away.

"What a party of chatterers you are!" he said with vexation, entering his own room, and seating himself on a chair.

"Don't be angry, please,"—said Émile.

"Very well, I will not,"—(Sánin really was not angry,—and, of course, it was hardly possible for him to wish that Gemma should know nothing). "Very well . . . have done with your embraces. Go away now, I 'm going to sleep. I want to be alone. I 'm tired."

"A splendid idea!"—exclaimed Pantaleone. "You need rest! You have fully earned it, noble signore! Come along, Emilio! On tiptoe! On tiptoe! Sssssssh!"

In saying that he wished to sleep, Sánin's sole object was to rid himself of his companions; but when he was left alone, he really did feel a considerable degree of fatigue in all his limbs. He had hardly closed an eye during the whole of the previous night, and throwing himself on the bed, he immediately sank into a deep sleep.

XXIII

He slept for several hours in succession, without waking. Then he began to dream that he was again fighting the duel, that Herr Klüber was standing opposite him, in the capacity of his antagonist, and that on a fir-tree sat a parrot—and the parrot was Pantaleone, and it kept reiterating, as it waggled its bill: "One—one—one! one—one—one—one!"

"One . . . . one . . . . one! !" he heard quite too plainly. He opened his eyes, half raised his head. . . . . Some one was tapping at his door.

"Come in!" shouted Sánin.

The waiter made his appearance, and announced that a lady was extremely anxious to see him.

"Gemma!"—flashed through his head . . . . but the lady turned out to be her mother—Frau Lenore.

As soon as she entered, she sank on a chair and began to weep.

"What is the matter with you, my good, dear Signora Roselli?"—began Sánin, seating himself by her side, and touching her hand with a gentle caress. "What has happened? Calm yourself, I entreat you."

"Akh, Herr Dimítri, I am very . . . . very unhappy!"

"You are unhappy?"

"Akh, very! And could I have expected it? All at once, like thunder in a clear sky. . . ."

She drew her breath with difficulty.

"But what is it? Explain yourself! Would you like a glass of water?"

"No, I thank you. . ." Frau Lenore wiped her eyes with her handkerchief, and fell to weeping again, with fresh vigour.—"You see, I know everything! Everything!"

"What do you mean by 'everything'?"

"Everything that has taken place to-day! And the cause . . . . is known to me also! You have behaved like a gentleman; but what an unfortunate combination of circumstances! 'T was not for nothing that I did not like that trip to Soden. . . . Not for nothing!" (Frau Lenore had said nothing of the sort on the day of the excursion, but now it seemed to her that she had foreseen "everything.")—"And I have come to you, as to a gentleman, as to a friend, although I saw you for the first time five days ago. . . . But, you know, I am a widow, alone. . . My daughter . . . ."

Tears choked Frau Lenore's voice. Sánin did not know what to think.—"Your daughter?"—he repeated after her.

"My daughter, Gemma,"—burst almost in a groan from beneath Frau Lenore's tear-drenched handkerchief,—"has announced to me to-day

that she will not marry Herr Klüber, and that I must dismiss him!"

Sánin even fell back a little. He had not expected this.

"I will not allude to the fact,"—pursued Frau Lenore,—"that no such thing ever happened in the world, as a betrothed girl's rejecting her betrothed husband; but, you see, that means our ruin, Herr Dimítri!"—Frau Lenore rolled her handkerchief carefully and tightly into a tiny, tiny ball, as though she were trying to lock up in it all her woe.—"We are no longer able to live on the income from our shop, Herr Dimítri! and Herr Klüber is very rich, and will be still richer. And why reject him? Because he did not stand up for his betrothed? Let us grant that it was not quite nice on his part; but, you see, he is a civilian, he was not educated in a university, and, as a staid merchant, he is bound to despise the frivolous pranks of an unknown officer. And what sort of an insult was it, Herr Dimítri?"

"Pardon me, Frau Lenore, you appear to be condemning me. . . ."

"I am not condemning you in the least! It is quite another matter with you. You, like all Russians, are a military man . . . ."

"Excuse me, I am not a . . . ."

"You are a foreigner, a passing traveller, I am grateful to you,"—went on Frau Lenore,

without heeding Sánin. She sighed, threw out her hands, spread the handkerchief out again, and blew her nose. From the very way in which her grief manifested itself, it could be seen that she had not been born under a northern sky.—"And how is Herr Klüber to trade in his shop, if he fights with his patrons? That is totally incompatible! And now I must dismiss him! But what are we to live on? In former days we made althea paste, and nougat with pistachio nuts—and customers came to us; but now everybody makes althea paste! Just reflect: even without this there will be talk in the town over your duel . . . can it be concealed? And all of a sudden the marriage is broken off! Why, that is a scandal, a scandal! Gemma is a very fine girl, she is very fond of me; but she is a stubborn republican, she defies the opinion of others. You alone can persuade her!"

Sánin was more astonished than before.—"I, Frau Lenore?"

"Yes, you alone. . . . You alone. That is why I came to you. I could not think of anything else! You are such a learned, such a nice man! You stood up for her. She will believe you! She *must* believe you—surely, you have risked your life for her! You will prove to her—but I can do no more!—You will prove to her that she will ruin herself and all the rest of us. You have saved my son—save my daughter also!

God himself has sent you hither. . . I am ready to implore you on my knees!"

And Frau Lenore half rose from her chair, as though preparing to throw herself at Sánin's feet. . . . He restrained her.

"Frau Lenore! For God's sake! What are you doing?"

"Do you promise? You would not have me fall dead here, before your eyes?"

Sánin was distracted. For the first time in his life it fell to his lot to deal with Italian blood aflame.

"I will do anything you like!"—he cried. "I will talk with Fräulein Gemma. . . ."

Frau Lenore screamed with joy.

"Only, really, I don't know what the result will be. . . ."

"Akh, do not refuse, do not refuse!"—said Frau Lenore, in an imploring voice. "You have already consented! The result will, assuredly, be excellent! At any rate, *I* can do no more. She will not listen to *me!*"

"Has she announced to you, in such decisive terms, her disinclination to marry Herr Klüber?"—inquired Sánin, after a brief silence.

"She cut as with a knife! She 's exactly like her father, Giovan' Battista! The intractable creature!"

"Intractable? She? . . ." repeated Sánin, slowly.

"Yes . . . . yes . . . . but she is an angel also. She will listen to you. You will come, you will come soon? Oh, my dear Russian friend!"—Frau Lenore rose impulsively from her chair, and with equal impulsiveness embraced the head of Sánin, who was sitting before her.—"Accept a mother's blessing—and give me some water!"

Sánin brought Signora Roselli a glass of water, gave her his word of honour that he would go immediately, escorted her down the stairs to the street—and, on returning to his room, he even wrung his hands, and opened his eyes to their fullest extent.

"Here,"—he thought,—"here, *now,* my life has taken a turn! Yes, and such a turn that my head reels with it." He did not even attempt to look within himself, to understand what was going on there: a hubbub—and that is all there was to it! "What a day this has been!"—his lips whispered involuntarily. "'Intractable' . . . . her mother says. . . . And I am to advise her . . . ei! And what am I to advise?"

Sánin's head really reeled—and above all this whirlwind of varied sensations, impressions, unexpressed thoughts, floated constantly the image of Gemma, that image which had graven itself ineffaceably in his memory on that warm, electrically-shaken night, in that dark window, beneath the rays of the swarming stars!

XXIV

With irresolute steps Sánin approached the house of Signora Roselli. His heart was beating violently; he plainly felt it, and even heard it thumping against his ribs. What was he to say to Gemma, how was he to begin the conversation with her? He entered the house not through the confectionery shop, but by the rear door. In the small entrance-room he encountered Frau Lenore. She was both delighted to see him, and terrified.

"I have been waiting, waiting for you,"—she said, in a whisper, squeezing his hand with both her hands alternately. "Go into the garden; she is there. And see here; I depend upon you!"

Sánin betook himself to the garden.

Gemma was sitting on a bench near the path, and from a large basket filled with cherries was sorting out the ripest upon a plate. The sun hung low—it was already between six and seven o'clock in the evening—and there was more of crimson than of gold in the broad rays with which it flooded Signora Roselli's little garden. From time to time the leaves whispered together, almost inaudibly, and as though at leisure, and belated bees buzzed disconnectedly from flower to the neighbouring flower, and somewhere a turtle-dove was cooing, monotonously and unweariedly.

Gemma wore the same round hat in which she had driven to Soden. She cast a glance at Sánin from beneath its upturned brim, and again bent over her basket.

Sánin approached Gemma, involuntarily making each step shorter and shorter, and . . . . and . . . and found nothing else to say to her than to ask why she was sorting the cherries.

Gemma made no haste in replying to him.

"These are over-ripe,"—she said, at last.—"They will do for preserves, and the others for filling tarts. You know, we sell those round tarts, with sugar."

So saying, Gemma bent her head still lower, and her right hand, with two cherries between its fingers, remained suspended in the air, between the basket and the plate.

"May I sit down beside you?"—asked Sánin.

"Yes."—Gemma moved along a little on the bench. Sánin seated himself by her side. "How shall I begin?" he thought. But Gemma extricated him from his dilemma.

"You fought a duel to-day,"—she said, with animation, turning her lovely, bashfully blushing face full upon him,—and what profound gratitude beamed in her eyes!—"And you are so calm? That signifies that danger does not exist for you?"

"Good gracious! I did not subject myself

to any danger. Everything went off very successfully and inoffensively."

Gemma passed her finger to right and left in front of her eyes. . . . Another Italian gesture. —"No! no! do not say that! You cannot deceive me! Pantaleone has told me all!"

"The idea of his telling you! Did he compare me to the statue of the Commander?"

"His expressions may be ridiculous, but his feeling is not ridiculous, and neither is that which you have done to-day. And all for my sake . . . for my sake. . . I shall never forget it."

"I assure you, Fräulein Gemma . . . ."

"I shall not forget it,"—she said, pausing between the words, and once more she looked fixedly at him, and turned away.

He could now see her delicate, pure profile; and it seemed to him that he had never beheld anything like it—and had never experienced anything like what he felt at that moment. His soul burned within him.

"And my promise!"—flashed through his thoughts.

"Fräulein Gemma . . . ." he began, after a momentary hesitation.

"What?"

She did not turn toward him; she went on sorting the cherries, cautiously seizing their stems in the tips of her fingers, carefully lifting the

leaves. . . . But how confidingly affectionate did that one word, " what," sound!

" Has your mother told you nothing . . . about . . . ."

" About? "

" About me? "

Gemma suddenly threw the cherries which she had picked up back into the basket.

" Has she been talking to you? "—she queried in her turn.

" Yes."

" What has she said? "

" She told me that you . . . that you had suddenly decided to change . . . . your former intentions."

Gemma's head was again bent low. It entirely disappeared under the hat; nothing but her neck, supple and soft as the stalk of a great flower, was visible.

" What intentions? "

" Your intentions . . . . with regard to . . . . the future organisation of your life."

" That is . . . are you talking about . . . . Herr Klüber? "

" Yes."

" Did mamma tell you that I did not wish to be Herr Klüber's wife? "

" Yes."

Gemma moved along the bench. The basket tipped, fell . . . . several cherries rolled along

the path. One minute elapsed . . . . then another. . . .

"Why did she tell you that?"—her voice made itself heard. As before, Sánin beheld only Gemma's neck. Her bosom was rising and falling more quickly than before.

"Why, your mother thought that, as you and I had, so to speak, made friends in a short time, and you had some degree of confidence in me, I might be in a position to give you some useful advice—and that you would heed me."

Gemma's hands slipped softly down upon her knees. . . . She began to arrange the folds of her gown.

"And what advice are you going to give me, M. Dimítri?"—she asked, after a pause.

Sánin perceived that Gemma's fingers were trembling on her knees. . . . She was arranging the folds of her gown merely for the purpose of hiding that tremor. . . He laid his hand gently on those pallid, tremulous fingers.

"Gemma,"—he said,—"why do you not look at me?"

She instantly tossed her hat back over her shoulder—and riveted on him eyes as trusting and grateful as ever. She waited to see what he would say. . . . But the sight of her face confused, and, as it were, blinded him. The warm glow of the evening sun illumined her young head—and the expression of that head was even

brighter and more brilliant than that glow itself.

"I am listening to you, M. Dimítri,"—she began, with a barely perceptible smile, and an almost imperceptible elevation of the eyebrows; "but what advice are you going to give me?"

"What advice?"—repeated Sánin.—"Why, you see, your mother thinks that to dismiss Herr Klüber simply because he did not display any particular bravery the day before yesterday . . . ."

"Simply because?" said Gemma, bending down, picking up the basket and placing it beside her on the bench.

"That . . . in general . . . to dismiss him would not be—wise, on your part; that it would be a step all of whose consequences should be well weighed; that, in conclusion, the condition of your affairs imposes certain obligations upon each member of your family. . . ."

"All that is mamma's idea,"—interposed Gemma; "those are her words. I know that; but what is your opinion?"

"Mine?"—Sánin ceased. He felt that something was rising in his throat, and stopping his breath.—"I also think,"—he began, with an effort. . . .

Gemma drew herself up.—"Also? You—also?"

"Yes . . . . that is to say . . . ." Sánin could not positively add another word.

"Very well,"—said Gemma. "If you, as a

friend, advise me to alter my decision . . . that is, not to alter my former decision,—I will think about it."—Without herself being aware of what she was doing, she began to lay the cherries back again from the plate into the basket. . . . "Mamma hopes that I will obey you. . . . What then? Perhaps I really shall obey you."

"But, pardon me, Fräulein Gemma, I should first like to know what causes have prompted you. . . ."

"I shall obey you,"—repeated Gemma,—all around her brow was quivering, her cheeks paled; she bit her lower lip.—"You have done so much for me that I am bound to do what you wish; I am bound to comply with your wish. I will tell mamma . . . that I will think it over. By the way, yonder she is, coming this way."

In fact, Frau Lenore made her appearance on the threshold of the door which led from the house into the garden. She was torn asunder with impatience: she could not sit still in one place. According to her calculations, Sánin must have finished his explanation with Gemma long ago, although his conversation with her had not lasted a quarter of an hour.

"No, no, no, for God's sake, tell her nothing for the present,"—ejaculated Sánin, hastily, almost in terror.—"Wait. . . . I will tell you, I will write to you . . . . and until then, do not decide on anything. . . . Wait!"

He pressed Gemma's hand, sprang up from the bench,—and to the great surprise of Frau Lenore, darted swiftly past her, raising his hat as he did so, muttered something unintelligible—and disappeared.

She approached her daughter.

"Tell me, please, Gemma . . . ."

The latter suddenly rose and embraced her. . . . . "Dear mamma, can you wait a little, just a wee little bit . . . . until to-morrow? Can you? So that there shall not be a word until to-morrow? . . . . Akh!"

She burst into sudden, bright tears, unexpected even by herself. This astonished Frau Lenore all the more because the expression of Gemma's face was far from sad, joyful rather.

"What ails thee?"—she asked. "Thou hast never been in the habit of weeping—and all of a sudden. . . ."

"Never mind, mamma, never mind! only wait. We must both wait. Ask me nothing until to-morrow—and let me sort the cherries, before the sun sets."

"But thou wilt be wise?"

"Oh, I am very wise!"—Gemma nodded her head significantly. She began to tie the cherries up in little bunches, holding them high in front of her blushing face. She did not wipe away her tears; they dried of themselves.

XXV

Sánin returned to his lodgings almost at a run. He felt, he was conscious that only there, only alone with himself, would it finally become clear to him what ailed him, what had happened to him. And, in fact, he had not succeeded in entering his room, he had not succeeded in seating himself in front of the writing-table, before he exclaimed in a mournful, dull voice, as he leaned his elbows on that same table, and pressed his palms to his face: "I love her, I love her madly!"—and he blushed all over inwardly, like a coal from which a layer of dead ashes has suddenly been blown away. Another instant . . . . and he was no longer able to understand how he could have sat beside her . . . . her!—and chatted with her, and not felt that he worshipped the very hem of her garment, that he was ready, as young men express it,—"to die at her feet." That last meeting in the garden had settled everything. Now, when he thought of her, she no longer presented herself to him with dishevelled curls, by the light of the stars:—he beheld her seated on the bench, he beheld her tossing back her hat with one movement—and gazing at him so trustingly . . . . and the tremor and thirst of love coursed through all his veins. He recalled the rose, which he had been carrying for the last three days

in his pocket: he pulled it out, and pressed it to his lips with such feverish force that he involuntarily frowned with pain. Now he no longer reflected on anything, considered anything, calculated or foresaw anything: he separated himself from all the past, he leaped forward: from the melancholy shore of his solitary, celibate life he plunged headlong into that cheerful, seething, mighty freshet—and his grief was small, and he did not care to know whither it would carry him, and whether it would not dash him to pieces against the cliff! These were no longer the gentle currents of the Uhland romance, which had so lately lulled him. . . . This was a mighty, irresistible billow! It flew, and galloped onward,—and he flew with it. . . .

He took a sheet of paper, and without erasures, almost with one sweep of the pen, he wrote the following:

"Dear Gemma! You know what advice I had taken upon myself to give you, you know what your mother wishes, and what her request to me was,—but what you do not know, and what I am bound to tell you now is —that I love you, love you with all the passion of a heart which loves for the first time! This fire has flamed within me suddenly, but with what force, I cannot find words to describe! ! When your mother came to me and asked me—it was only smouldering within me—otherwise, as an honourable man, I certainly would have refused to execute her commission. . . . The very avowal

which I am now making to you is the avowal of an honest man. You must know with whom you have to do, —no misunderstanding must exist between us. You see that I cannot give you any advice. . . . I love you, love you, love you—and there is nothing else either in my mind or in any heart! !

"Dm. Sánin."

Having folded and sealed this note, Sánin was on the point of ringing for the waiter, and despatching him with it. . . "No! that is awkward. . . . By Émile? But to betake myself to the shop, and seek him out, from among the other clerks, is awkward. Moreover, night is at hand, and, probably, he has already left the shop."

But, as he meditated thus, Sánin put on his hat, and went out into the street; he turned one corner, then another—and, to his indescribable joy, beheld Émile in front of him. With a bag under his arm, and a bundle of papers in his hand, the young enthusiast was hurrying homeward.

"Not without cause do they say that every lover has his star,"—thought Sánin, and called to Émile.

The latter wheeled round, and immediately rushed to him.

Sánin did not allow him to go into raptures, handed him the note, explained to him to whom and how to deliver it. . . . Émile listened attentively.

"No one is to see it?"—he asked, imparting to his face a significant and mysterious expression:—as much as to say, "we understand the gist of the matter!"

"Yes, my dear friend,"—said Sánin, and became slightly embarrassed; but he tapped Émilé on the cheek, nevertheless . . . . "and if there should be an answer . . . you will bring me the answer, will you not? I shall remain at home."

"Don't you worry about that!"—whispered Émile merrily, and ran off—and as he ran, he nodded at him once more.

Sánin returned home—and, without lighting his candles, threw himself on the divan, put his hands behind his head, and surrendered himself to those sensations of love which had just been avowed, that cannot be described: he who has experienced them knows their languor and sweetness: it is useless to talk about them to him who has not experienced them.

The door opened—Émile's head appeared.

"I have brought it,"—he whispered:—"here it is, the answer!"

He showed a folded paper, and raised it above his head.

Sánin sprang from the divan, and snatched it from Émile's hands. Passion had flamed up too powerfully within him: he cared nothing now for secrecy, not even for the preservation of propriety—even before that young lad, her brother.

He would have felt scruples before him, he would have liked to put constraint on himself—if he could!

He went to the window—and, by the light of a street lantern, which stood directly in front of the house, he read the following lines:

"I beg you, I implore you, *not to come to us all day to-morrow, not to show yourself*. This is necessary for me, imperatively necessary,—and then all will be settled. I know you will not refuse me, because . . . .

"GEMMA."

Sánin read this note through twice—oh, how touchingly-charming and beautiful did her handwriting appear to him!—meditated a while, and, turning to Émile, who, desirous of letting it be understood what a discreet young man he was, was standing with his face to the wall and drumming on it with his finger-nails, called him loudly by name.

Émile immediately ran to Sánin.—"What are your orders?"

"Listen, my dear friend . . . . "

"Monsieur Dimítri,"—Émile interrupted him, in a reproachful voice:—"why don't you call me 'thou'?"

Sánin broke into a laugh.—"Well, all right. Listen, my dear friend"—(Émile skipped with satisfaction)—"listen: thou art to say *yonder*, thou understandest where, that everything will

be punctually executed"—(Émile compressed his lips, and nodded his head solemnly)—"and thyself . . . . What art thou going to do to-morrow?"

"I? What am I going to do? What would you like to have me do?"

"If thou canst, come to me as early in the morning as possible,—and we will roam about the suburbs of Frankfurt until evening. . . . Wilt thou?"

Again Émile gave a skip.—"Good gracious, what in the world could be nicer! Stroll with you—why, that is simply splendid! I'll come, without fail!"

"And what if they will not give thee leave?"

"They will!"

"Hearken . . . Don't tell there that I have invited thee for the whole day."

"Why should I tell? I'll simply walk off! What harm is there in that!" Émile kissed Sánin heartily, and ran away.

But Sánin paced his chamber for a long time—and went to bed late. He gave himself up to the same delicate and sweet sensations, to that same joyful swooning in the presence of a new life. Sánin was greatly pleased that he had hit upon the idea of inviting Émile for the morrow; he resembled his sister in countenance. "He will remind me of her," thought Sánin.

But what astonished him most of all was: how

he could have been different yesterday from what he was to-day. It seemed to him that he had loved Gemma "eternally"—and had loved her precisely as he loved her to-day.

XXVI

On the following day, at eight o'clock in the morning, Émile, with Tartaglia in a leash, presented himself before Sánin. Had he sprung from German parents, he could not have displayed more punctuality. He had lied at home: he had said that he was going to walk with Sánin until breakfast, and then go to the shop. While Sánin was dressing, Émile tried to talk to him, in a rather irresolute way, it is true, about Gemma, about the breaking of her betrothal with Herr Klüber; but Sánin maintained a grim silence in response, and Émile, showing that he understood why it was not proper to touch lightly on that important point, no longer addressed him,—and merely assumed, from time to time, a concentrated and even stern expression.

After drinking coffee, the two friends set out —on foot, of course,—for Hausen, a small hamlet situated a short distance from Frankfurt, and surrounded by forests. The entire chain of the Taunus Mountains is visible thence, as though in the palm of one's hand. The weather was magnificent: the sun shone and blazed, but

did not burn; a fresh breeze rustled briskly among the green leaves; over the ground, in small patches, the shadows of the lofty, circular clouds glided smoothly and swiftly. The young men soon emerged from the town and stepped off boldly and merrily along the smoothly-swept road. They entered the forest—and rambled there for quite a long time; they ate a very hearty breakfast in the village inn; then they climbed the hills, admired the views, rolled stones down, and clapped their hands, when the stones skipped amusingly and oddly, like rabbits, until a man who was passing below, and was invisible to them, berated them roundly, in a powerful, resonant voice; then they lay down, stretching themselves out on the short, dry moss, of a yellowish-violet hue: they drank beer in another hostelry, they ran races, leaped for a wager, to see who would jump furthest. They discovered an echo, and talked with it, sang, shouted "a-oo," broke twigs, decorated their hats with fronds of fern—and even danced. Tartaglia participated in all these occupations, to the best of his ability and understanding: he could not throw stones, it is true, but he rolled heels over head himself, and howled an accompaniment when the young men sang,—and even drank beer, although with evident disgust: a student, to whom he had once belonged, had taught him that trick. However, he obeyed Emile badly—it was quite another matter

with his master Pantaleone,—and when Émile ordered him to "talk," or "sneeze,"—he merely wagged his tail, and thrust out his tongue like a cylinder.

The young men also chatted together. At the beginning of the stroll, Sánin, as being the older, and therefore the most sensible, undertook to discuss, what is Fate, or the predestination of destiny, and what is the vocation of man, and its significance, but the conversation speedily took a less serious turn. Émile began to question his friend and patron about Russia, about the manner of fighting duels there, and whether the women are beautiful there, and whether one could learn the Russian language in a short time, and how he had felt when the officer had taken aim at him. And Sánin, in his turn, interrogated Émile about his father, his mother, their family affairs in general, striving in every way not to mention Gemma's name,—and thinking only of her. Properly speaking, he did not even think of her—but of the morrow, of that mysterious to-morrow, which was to bring him unknown, unprecedented happiness! There seemed to be a curtain, a thin, light curtain, hanging in front of his mental vision, swaying gently,—and behind that curtain he felt . . . he felt the presence of a young, immovable, divine face, with an affectionate smile on its lips, and eyelashes downcast with sternness, feigned sternness. And that face was not the

face of Gemma—it was the face of bliss itself! And lo, at last, *his* hour has come, the curtain has rolled away, the mouth opens, the eyelashes are raised—the divinity has seen him—and then there is light, as of the sun, and joy, and rapture unending! He thinks of that morrow—and again his soul swoons within him for joy, in the yearning of incessantly-augmenting anticipation!

And nothing interferes with this anticipation, this yearning. It accompanies his every movement—and hinders not in the least. It does not prevent his making a capital dinner in a third hostelry with Émile. And only from time to time, like a brief gleam of lightning, does the thought flash up within him,—what if any one in the world knew about it? This yearning does not prevent his playing at leap-frog with Émile, after dinner. This game takes place on a luxuriant green meadow . . . . and what is Sánin's surprise, what is his amazement, when, with his legs cleverly spread, and in the act of flying like a bird over the squatting Émile, to the loud barking of Tartaglia,—he suddenly sees before him, on the very edge of the green glade,—two officers, in whom he immediately recognises his antagonist of the day before, and his second, Messrs. von Dönhof and Richter! Each of them sticks a monocle in his eye, and stares at him, and grins. . . . Sánin lands on his feet, turns away,

hastily dons his discarded coat, utters an abrupt word to Émile, the latter also puts on his jacket —and both immediately decamp.

They returned late to Frankfurt.—"I shall be scolded,"—said Émile to Sánin, as he bade him farewell:—"well, I don't care! But I have had such a splendid, splendid day!"

On reaching his quarters in the hotel, Sánin found a note from Gemma. She appointed him a tryst—on the following day, at seven o'clock in the morning, in one of the public parks which surround Frankfurt on all sides.

How his heart quivered! How glad he was that he had obeyed her so implicitly! And, great heavens, what . . . . what all did not that unprecedented, unique, impossible and indubitable morrow promise!

He riveted his eyes upon Gemma's letter. The long, elegant tail of the letter G, the first letter of her name, which stood at the end of the sheet, —recalled to his mind her beautiful fingers, her hand. . . . He thought that he had never touched that hand with his lips. . . . "Italian women,"—he thought,—"are bashful and strict, contrary to their reputation. . . . And Gemma is far more so! Empress . . . . goddess . . . . pure, virgin marble. . . . But the time will come —and 't is not far off . . . . "

There was one happy mortal in Frankfurt that

night . . . He slept; but he could say of himself, in the words of the poet:

"I sleep . . . but my sensitive heart sleeps not. . . ."

And it beat as lightly as beat the wings of a butterfly, perched upon a flower, and steeped in the summer sunshine.

XXVII

At five o'clock Sánin awoke, at six he was already dressed, at half-past six he was strolling through the public park, in sight of the little arbour which Gemma had mentioned in her note.

The morning was still, warm, grey. It sometimes seemed as though the rain were on the very point of descending: but the outstretched hand felt nothing, and it was only when one glanced at the sleeve of his garment that little traces of raindrops, like the tiniest pearls, could be detected; but even these speedily ceased. As for the wind—it was as though no such thing existed on earth. Every sound, instead of flying, diffused itself around: in the distance, the whitish mist grew slightly more dense; the air was laden with the fragrance of mignonette and the flowers of the white acacia.

The shops were not yet open on the streets, but pedestrians were already beginning to make

their appearance; now and then a solitary carriage rumbled past . . . . no one was strolling in the park. A gardener was scraping the path with a spade, in a leisurely manner, and a decrepit old woman in a black cloth cloak was hobbling along an alley. Not for a single instant could Sánin take that wretched being for Gemma,—and yet, his heart gave a bound within him, and he followed the retreating black spot attentively with his eyes.

Seven! boomed out the clock on a tower.

Sánin came to a halt.—Was it possible that she would not come? A cold shiver suddenly coursed through all his limbs. That same shiver was repeated a moment later,—but for another reason. Sánin heard behind him light footsteps, the faint rustle of a woman's gown. . . He turned round: 't was she!

Gemma was walking behind him, along the path. She wore a greyish mantilla and a small, dark hat. She glanced at Sánin, turned her head aside—and, as she came on a level with him, walked swiftly past.

"Gemma!" he said, in a barely-audible voice.

She gave him a slight nod—and continued to walk on. He followed her.

He was breathing brokenly. His legs obeyed him badly.

Gemma passed the arbour, turned to the right, passed a small, flattish basin, wherein sparrows

were restlessly splashing—and, entering a clump of lofty lilacs, sank down on a bench. The spot was comfortable and sheltered. Sánin seated himself by her side.

A minute passed—and neither he nor she had uttered a word: she did not even look at him —and he gazed not at her face, but at her clasped hands, in which she held a small parasol. What was there to say? What was there to say, that, by its significance, could compare with their mere presence here, together, alone, so early, so close to each other?

"You . . . . are not angry with me?"—articulated Sánin at last.

It would have been difficult for Sánin to say anything more stupid than these words . . . . he realised that himself. . . . But, at all events, the silence was broken.

"I?"—she replied. "What for? No."

"And you believe me?"—he went on.

"What you wrote?"

"Yes."

Gemma dropped her head, and said nothing. The parasol slipped from her hands. She hastily picked it up, before it fell on the path.

"Akh, believe me, believe what I wrote to you,"—exclaimed Sánin; all his timidity had suddenly vanished—he spoke with ardour:—"if there is any truth on earth, sacred, indubitable

truth,—then it is that I love you, love you passionately, Gemma!"

She cast a sidelong, momentary glance at him —and again came near dropping her parasol.

"Believe me, believe me,"—he reiterated. He implored her, stretched out his hands to her—and dared not touch her. "What did you wish to have me do, to convince you?"

Again she darted a glance at him.

"Tell me, Monsieur Dimítri,"—she began:—"day before yesterday, when you came to persuade me,—you, of course, did not yet know . . . . did not feel . . . . "

"I did feel,"—interpolated Sánin,—"but I did not know. I fell in love with you the very moment I beheld you,—but did not immediately understand what you had become for me! Moreover, I heard that you were a betrothed bride. . . . As for your mother's commission—in the first place, how could I refuse? and, in the second place,—I think I transmitted my message to you in *such* a way that you might have guessed. . . . "

Heavy footsteps became audible, and a decidedly corpulent gentleman, with a travelling-bag slung across his shoulder, a foreigner, evidently, stepped forth from behind the clump of lilacs—and with the unceremoniousness of a chance traveller, surveyed with his glance the young pair who were sitting on the bench, coughed loudly—and went his way.

"Your mother,"—began Sánin, as soon as the clumping of the heavy feet had died away,—"told me that your refusal would produce a scandal" (Gemma frowned slightly); "that I, myself, had, in part, given rise to unfavourable comments, and that, consequently . . . . consequently . . . upon me—in a certain degree—devolved the obligation of telling you not to dismiss your betrothed, Herr Klüber. . . ."

"Monsieur Dimítri," said Gemma, passing her hand over her hair, on the side turned to Sánin:—"please do not call Herr Klüber my betrothed. I shall never be his bride. I have dismissed him."

"You have dismissed him? When?"

"Yesterday."

"In person?"

"Yes. At our house. He came to us."

"Gemma! That means that you love me?"

She turned toward him.

"Had it been otherwise . . . . would I have come hither?" she whispered—and both her hands fell upon the bench.

Sánin seized those hands, which lay helplessly, with the palms upturned, in his own,—pressed them to his eyes, to his lips. . . . Then the veil which had appeared before him in his vision of the day before was lifted! Here it was, happiness, here was its radiant face!

He raised his head—and looked at Gemma—

straightly and boldly. She also looked at him—somewhat downward, from above. The gaze of her half-opened eyes glimmered dimly, bathed in light, blissful tears. But her face was not smiling . . . . no! it laughed, also with a blissful though noiseless laugh.

He tried to draw her to his breast, but she resisted, and without ceasing to laugh with the same noiseless laugh, she shook her head in negation. "Wait," her happy eyes seemed to say.

"Oh, Gemma!"—cried Sánin: "could I have dreamed that thou—" (his heart trembled within him, when his lips uttered, for the first time, this "thou")—"that thou wouldst love me?"

"I did not expect it myself,"—said Gemma softly.

"Could I imagine,"—pursued Sánin,—"could I imagine, when approaching Frankfurt, where I intended to remain only a few hours, that I would find here the happiness of my whole life?"

"Of your whole life? Really?"—asked Gemma.

"Of my whole life, forever and forever!"—exclaimed Sánin with fresh impetuosity.

The gardener's shovel suddenly began to scrape a couple of paces from the bench on which they were sitting.

"Let us go home"—whispered Gemma.—"Let us go together—wilt thou?"

If she had said to him, at that moment:

"Fling thyself into the sea—wilt thou?"—he would have flown headlong into the gulf, before she had uttered the last word.

Together they left the park, and wended their way homeward, not through the city streets, but by way of the suburbs.

XXVIII

Sánin walked on, now by Gemma's side, now a little behind her, never taking his eyes from her, and never ceasing to smile. And she seemed to be hurrying onward . . . . yet appeared also to be pausing. To tell the truth, both of them—he all pale, she all rosy with emotion,—moved forward like persons befogged. That which they had done together a few moments before—that surrender of each soul to the other,—was so mighty and so new and dread a thing; everything in their lives had so suddenly come to a standstill, had undergone a change, that they could not recover themselves, and were merely conscious of the whirlwind which had caught them up in its grasp, like that nocturnal whirlwind which had almost hurled them into each other's embrace. Sánin walked along—and felt that he was even regarding Gemma in a different light: every moment he descried several peculiarities in her walk, in her movements,—and, great heavens! how illimitably dear and charming they were to him!

And she was conscious that he was gazing at her thus.

Sánin and she loved for the first time, all the marvels of first love were accomplished in them. First love is—a revolution: the monotonously-regular course of life which has established itself is broken and shattered in one instant, and youth stands at the barricade, its flaunting standard waves high in air,—and whatever may be in store for it ahead—death or new life—it wafts to all its rapturous greeting.

"What is this? Can it be our old man?"—said Sánin, pointing at a muffled figure, which was making its way hurriedly along on one side, as though endeavouring to remain unperceived. In the midst of his superabundance of bliss, he felt impelled to talk to Gemma—not about love—that was a settled, a sacred thing,—but about something or other different.

"Yes, that is Pantaleone,"—replied Gemma merrily and happily. "He certainly must have followed on my heels out of the house; all day yesterday, he watched every step I took. . . . He guesses the truth!"

"He guesses the truth!"—repeated Sánin rapturously.—What could Gemma say over which he would not go into raptures!

Then he begged her to narrate to him, in detail, everything which had taken place on the preceding day.

And she immediately began to relate, hurrying, entangling herself, smiling, heaving little sighs, and exchanging brief, brilliant glances with Sánin. She told him how, after the conversation of two days previously, her mamma had persistently endeavoured to get out of her, Gemma, something definite: how she had rid herself of Frau Lenore, by promising to inform her of her decision within twenty-four hours; how she had secured that much time—and how difficult it had been: how Herr Klüber had made his appearance quite unexpectedly, more conceited and starched than ever: how he had expressed his displeasure at the boyishly-unpardonable, and for him, Klüber, deeply-insulting (that was his precise expression) sally of the Russian stranger—"he meant *thy* duel"—and how he had demanded that *thou* shouldst immediately be forbidden the house. "Because,"—he added—and here Gemma lightly imitated his voice and manner,—"it casts a shadow on my honour: as though I could not have protected my betrothed, had I regarded that as either indispensable or useful! All Frankfurt will learn to-morrow that a stranger has fought with an officer on account of my betrothed—who ever heard of such a thing? It sullies my honour!" "Mamma agreed with him—just imagine!—but at this point I suddenly informed him that there was no need for his worrying about his honour and

his person, there was no need for him to feel insulted by gossip about his *betrothed,* because I was no longer his betrothed, and would never be his wife! I must confess that I would have liked first to have a talk with you . . . . with thee, before definitively dismissing him; but he came . . . and I could not restrain myself. Mamma even shrieked with fright, and I went into the other room and brought him his ring—thou didst not notice, I had already taken off that ring two days ago—and gave it to him. He was frightfully offended; but as he is frightfully egotistical and conceited, he did not say much and took himself off. Of course, I had to endure a great deal from mamma, and it pained me greatly to see how grieved she was—and I thought that I had been in a little too much of a hurry, but, you see, I had thy note—and even without that, I already knew . . . . "

"That I loved thee,"—put in Sánin.

"Yes . . . . that thou lovedst me."

Thus spoke Gemma, faltering and smiling, and lowering her head, or relapsing altogether into silence, every time that any one came toward her, or passed her. And Sánin listened ecstatically, enjoying the very sound of her voice, as, on the day before, he had admired her handwriting.

"Mamma is extremely grieved," — began Gemma again—and her words followed one another very, very swiftly:—"she absolutely re-

fuses to take into consideration the fact that Herr Klüber might be repulsive to me, that I was not marrying him for love—but in consequence of her earnest entreaties. . . . She suspects you . . . . thee; that is to say, to speak in plain terms, she is convinced that I have fallen in love with thee,—and this is all the more painful to her, that such a thing had never even entered her head day before yesterday, and she even commissioned thee to reason with me. . . . And a strange commission it was—was n't it? Now she calls thee . . . . you, a sly dog, a crafty man, says that you have betrayed her trust, and predicts that you will deceive me also . . . . "

"But, Gemma,"—exclaimed Sánin,—"didst not thou tell her. . . ."

"I have told her nothing! What right had I, without having talked with you?"

Sánin clasped his hands.—"Gemma, I hope that now, at least, thou wilt confess all to her, thou wilt take me to her. . . . I want to prove to thy mother that I am not a deceiver!"

Sánin's breast fairly heaved with a flood of magnanimous and fervent emotions.

Gemma stared at him with all her eyes.—"Do you really want to go to mamma now, with me? to mamma, who asserts that . . . that everything is impossible between us,—and nothing will ever come of it?"—There was one word which Gemma could not make up her mind to utter. . .

It burned her lips; but Sánin uttered it all the more willingly.

"I know no higher felicity, Gemma, than to marry thee, to be thy husband!"

He no longer recognised any bounds to his love, to his magnanimity, nor to his firmness.

On hearing these words, Gemma, who had halted for a moment, proceeded onward more rapidly than ever. . . . She seemed to wish to flee from that too-great and unexpected happiness!

But all at once her limbs gave way beneath her. From round the corner of a lane, a few paces distant from her, in a new hat and new short-coat, straight as an arrow, curled like a poodle, Herr Klüber made his appearance. He caught sight of Gemma, caught sight of Sánin—gave a sort of internal snort, and throwing back his supple figure, he advanced foppishly to meet them. Sánin writhed, but on glancing at Klüber's face, to which its owner was endeavouring, to the best of his ability, to impart an expression of scornful surprise, and even compassion,—on glancing at that ruddy, commonplace face, he suddenly felt a flood of wrath—and strode forward.

Gemma grasped his arm, and with calm decision giving him hers, gazed straight into the face of her former betrothed. . . . The latter screwed up his eyes, shrank together, turned to one side,

—and, muttering between his teeth: "The usual ending of the song!"—(*"Das alte Ende vom Liede!"*)—retreated, with the same dandified, slightly springy gait as usual.

"What was that he said, the rascal!"—inquired Sánin, and tried to rush after Klüber; but Gemma held him back, and walked on with him, still without withdrawing her arm, which was thrust through his.

The Roselli confectionery shop appeared ahead. Once more Gemma halted.

"Dimítri, Monsieur Dimítri,"—said she: "we have not yet entered yonder house, we have not yet seen mamma. . . . If you still wish to reflect, if . . . you are still free, Dimítri!"

In reply, Sánin pressed her arm very, very firmly to his breast—and led her forward.

"Mamma,"—said Gemma, entering with Sánin the room where sat Frau Lenore,—"I have brought the real one!"

XXIX

Had Gemma announced that she had brought the cholera, or even death itself with her, Frau Lenore could not, we are free to assume, have received the news with any greater despair. She immediately seated herself in a corner, with her face to the wall,—and burst into tears, almost wailed, precisely as a Russian peasant-woman

does over the coffin of her husband or her son. At first, Gemma was so disconcerted that she did not even approach her mother—and stood like a statue, in the middle of the room; and Sánin was thrown into utter confusion,—almost to the point of launching into tears himself! This inconsolable weeping lasted for a whole hour: a whole hour! Pantaleone deemed it best to lock the outer door of the shop, in order that no stranger might enter—although the hour was early. The old man was puzzled—and, at any rate, did not approve of the haste with which Gemma and Sánin had acted; however, he could not make up his mind to condemn them, and was ready to accord them his protection—in case of need; he had greatly disliked Herr Klüber! Émile regarded himself as the intermediary between his friend and his sister—and was almost proud that everything had turned out so splendidly! He was not in the least able to understand why Frau Lenore was grieving so violently, and in his heart he decided on the spot that women, even the best of them, suffer from a deficiency of intellectual capacity! Sánin fared worse than all the rest. Frau Lenore raised a howl, and flourished her arms violently, as soon as he came near her—and in vain did he strive, as he stood at a distance, to exclaim loudly, several times: "I ask your daughter's hand!" Frau Lenore was especially vexed at herself, because: "how could she have

been so blind—and seen nothing!"—"If my Giovan' Battista had been alive,"—she kept repeating through her tears,—"nothing of this sort would have happened!"—"O Lord, what is this?"—thought Sánin—"why, this is stupid, I must say!" He did not dare to look at Gemma, neither could she bring herself to raise her eyes to his. She contented herself with patiently tending her mother, who at first repulsed her. . . .

At last, little by little, the storm subsided. Frau Lenore ceased to weep, permitted Gemma to lead her out of the corner, in which she had ensconced herself, seat her in an arm-chair near the window, and give her some water with orange-flower essence to drink; she permitted Sánin—not to approach . . . oh, no!—but, at least, to remain in the room—(she had previously demanded incessantly that he should withdraw)—and did not interrupt him while he was talking. Sánin immediately availed himself of the calm which had set in,—and displayed amazing eloquence: he would hardly have been able to set forth his intentions and his sentiments to Gemma herself with as much ardour and persuasiveness. Those sentiments were of the most sincere description, those intentions were of the purest, as in the case of Almaviva in "The Barber of Seville."—He did not conceal, either from Frau Lenore or from himself, the disadvantageous aspects of those intentions; but the disad-

vantages were only apparent! It is true that he was a foreigner, that they had made his acquaintance only a short time before, that they knew nothing definite about his personality, or about his means; but he was ready to present all the necessary credentials to prove that he was a man of good standing, and not a poor one; he would send for the most indubitable testimonials of his fellow-countrymen!—He hoped that Gemma would be happy with him, and that he would be able to sweeten her separation from her relatives! . . . At the mention of separation—that one word "separation" came near spoiling the whole business. . . . Frau Lenore trembled all over, and began to throw herself about. . . . Sánin hastened to remark that the separation would be only temporary—and that, after all, possibly—there would be none at all!

Sánin's eloquence was not wasted. Frau Lenore began to glance at him, although still with bitterness and reproach, yet no longer with her former repulsion and wrath; then she permitted him to approach, and even to sit down beside her (Gemma was sitting on her other side); then she began to upbraid him—not with looks alone, but with words, which denoted a certain softening of her heart: she began to complain, and her complaints grew ever more quiet and gentle; they alternated with questions, addressed sometimes to her daughter, sometimes to Sánin; then she

allowed him to take her hand, and did not immediately withdraw it . . . then she fell to weeping again—but with tears of an entirely different sort. . . . Then she smiled sadly, and mourned the absence of Giovan' Battista, but in another sense than previously. . . . Another moment elapsed—and the two culprits—Sánin and Gemma—were already kneeling at her feet, and she was laying her hands on their heads by turns; yet another moment elapsed—and they were embracing and kissing her, and Émile, his face beaming with rapture, ran into the room, and also flung himself upon the closely-united group.

Pantaleone looked into the room, grinned and frowned simultaneously,—and, wending his way to the shop, opened the outer door.

XXX

The transition from despair to sadness, and from that to "quiet resignation," was accomplished with considerable rapidity in Frau Lenore;—but that quiet resignation, in its turn, was promptly converted into secret satisfaction, which, nevertheless, was in every way concealed and repressed, for the sake of propriety. Frau Lenore had liked Sánin from the very first day of their acquaintance; having accustomed herself to the idea of his being her son-in-law, she found nothing especially disagreeable in it, although

she considered it her duty to preserve on her countenance a somewhat offended . . . . or, rather, worried expression. Moreover, everything which had happened during the last few days had been so remarkable. . . . One thing after another! As a practical woman, and a mother, Frau Lenore thought it her duty to subject Sánin to a varied interrogatory: and Sánin, who, on setting out in the morning for his tryst with Gemma, had not had the remotest idea of marrying her,—in truth, he had thought of nothing at the time, and had merely surrendered himself to the promptings of his passion—Sánin, with entire readiness, and even, one might say, with zeal, entered into his rôle of a betrothed bridegroom, and to all the questions replied circumstantially, in detail, willingly. Having convinced herself that he was a genuine, born noble, and even rather surprised that he was not a prince, Frau Lenore assumed a serious mien and "warned him beforehand that she meant to be quite unceremoniously frank with him, because she was compelled thereto by her sacred obligations as a mother!"—to which Sánin replied that he had expected nothing else from her, and himself earnestly implored her not to spare him!

Then Frau Lenore remarked that Herr Klüber (as she uttered that name, she sighed a little, compressed her lips, and stammered)—Herr Klüber, Gemma's *former* betrothed, already was

in receipt of an income of eight thousand guldens—and that, with every year, that sum would increase—and what was his, Sánin's income?

"Eight thousand guldens,"—repeated Sánin, in a drawl. . . . "That makes, in our money, about fifteen thousand rubles. . . . My income is much less. I have a small estate in the government of Tula. . . . If the farming is well managed, it may yield—and even ought, without fail, to yield, five or six thousand. . . . Yes, and if I enter the service—I may easily receive a salary of two thousand rubles."

"The service, in Russia?" exclaimed Frau Lenore. "That means that I shall have to part with Gemma!"

"I may get myself assigned to the diplomatic corps!"—interposed Sánin; "I have several influential connections. . . . Then the service is discharged abroad. If not, here is another thing which can be done—and this is far the best of all: sell my estate, and use the resulting capital in some profitable undertaking—for instance, for the development of your confectionery business."—Sánin was, to tell the truth, conscious that he was saying something rather absurd, but an incomprehensible audacity held possession of him! He would glance at Gemma, who, from the moment the "practical" discussion began, had kept rising, walking about the room, seating herself again,—he would glance at her—and then no ob-

stacle existed for him, and he was ready to arrange everything, instantly, in the best manner possible—if only she were not disquieted!

"Herr Klüber also wished to give me a small sum for repairing the shop," said Frau Lenore, after a brief hesitation.

"Mother! for God's sake, mother!"—cried Gemma, in Italian.

"We must discuss these matters betimes, my daughter,"—Frau Lenore answered her, in the same language.

Again she turned to Sánin, and began to question him as to what laws exist in Russia concerning marriage, and whether there were any obstacles to the union with Roman Catholics—as there were in Prussia?—(At that time—in the '40's,—all Germany still recalled the quarrel between the Prussian government and the Archbishop of Cologne, on the point of mixed marriages.)—But when Frau Lenore learned that, by marrying a noble, her daughter herself would become a gentlewoman—she manifested some satisfaction.—"But, of course, you must first go to Russia?"

"Why?"

"But why not? To receive permission from your emperor?"

Sánin explained to her that that was not in the least necessary . . . . but that, perhaps, he really would have to go to Russia for a short time

before the wedding— (as he uttered these words, his heart contracted within him,—Gemma, who was looking at him, understood that it contracted —and flushed crimson, and became thoughtful) —and that he would try to take advantage of his stay in his native land to sell his estate . . . . in any case, he would bring thence the necessary money.

"I should also like to ask you to bring me some good Astrakhan lambskins, for a cloak," —said Frau Lenore. "I hear that they are wonderfully fine there, and wonderfully cheap!"

"I certainly will bring you some—with the greatest pleasure!—and Gemma also!"—exclaimed Sánin.

"And me a morocco cap, embroidered in silver,"—interposed Émile, thrusting in his head from the adjoining room.

"Very well,—I will . . . and some slippers for Pantaleone."

"Come, why so? why?"—remarked Frau Lenore. "We are talking about serious things now. But here is another point,"—added the practical lady. "You say you will sell your estate. But how will you do that? Does that mean that you will sell the peasants also?"

Sánin felt as though he had been stabbed in the ribs. He remembered that, in talking with Signora Roselli and her daughter about the serf-

law, which, according to his assertions, roused in him profound indignation, he had repeatedly assured them that he would never sell his serfs on any terms whatever, because he regarded such sale as an immoral act.

"I shall endeavour to sell my estate to a man whom I shall know under a favourable aspect,"—he articulated, not without hesitation—"or, perhaps, the peasants themselves will like to buy it."

"That is the best of all,"—assented Frau Lenore. "If not, to sell live people . . . ." *"Barbari!"* growled Pantaleone, who, following Émile's example, had made his appearance in the doorway, shook his top-knot, and vanished.

"It's a bad business!"—thought Sánin to himself—and shot a stealthy glance at Gemma. She did not appear to have heard his last words. "Well, never mind!" he thought again.

In this wise did the practical conversation continue almost until dinner-time. Frau Lenore grew entirely tame toward the last—and had already begun to call Sánin "Dmítry," shook her finger affectionately at him, and promised to avenge herself for his craftiness. She asked a great many and minute questions about his native land, because "that, also, is very important,"—demanded, also, that he should describe to her the marriage ceremony, as the rite was celebrated in the Russian Church, and went into raptures in

advance over Gemma in a white gown, with a golden crown on her head.[1]

"For my child is as beautiful as a queen,"—she said, with maternal pride; "and there are no such kings in the world!"

"There is no other Gemma in the world!"—chimed in Sánin.

"Yes; that is why she is—Gemma!" (Every one knows that, in the Italian language, Gemma signifies "a precious stone—a jewel.")

Gemma flew to kiss her mother. . . . It seemed as though only now had she begun to breathe freely—and the burden which oppressed her had fallen from her soul.

And Sánin, all of a sudden, felt so happy, such a childlike merriment filled his soul, because, lo, it had come to pass, those dreams to which he had surrendered himself, in those same rooms, had come to pass; his whole being leaped for joy to such a degree that he immediately betook himself to the shop; he was irrevocably bent upon serving behind the counter, at whatever cost, as he had done several days previously. . . . As much as to say: "I have a full right to do it now! for I 'm a domestic man now!"

And he really did stand behind the counter, and really did trade, that is to say, he sold to two little girls who entered a pound of candy, instead

[1] Golden (gilded) crowns are held over the heads of the bride and groom during the marriage ceremony proper, which is called "crowning."—TRANSLATOR.

of which he dealt them out at least two pounds, and took only half price from them. At dinner, as a betrothed bridegroom, he officially occupied a seat next to Gemma. Frau Lenore pursued her practical calculations. Émile did nothing but laugh, and tease Sánin to take him to Russia with him. It was decided that Sánin should set off at the end of a fortnight. Pantaleone alone presented a rather surly aspect, so that even Frau Lenore upbraided him.—"And yet thou wert his second!"—Pantaleone looked askance.

Gemma maintained silence nearly all the time, but never had her face been brighter or more beautiful. After dinner, she called Sánin apart into the garden for a moment, and halting beside the bench on which she had been sorting cherries two days before, she said to him:—"Do not be angry with me, Dimítri; but I wish to remind thee, once more, that thou must not consider thyself bound. . . . "

He did not allow her to finish her sentence. . . .

Gemma turned aside her face.—"And as for what mamma alluded to—thou rememberest?—the difference of our religious creeds, so much for that!" . . . .

She seized a small garnet cross, which hung on her neck upon a slender cord, gave a violent wrench, and broke the cord—and gave him the cross.

"If I am thine, then thy faith is my faith also!"

Sánin's eyes were still wet when he and Gemma returned to the house.

By the evening, everything had got into its wonted routine. They even played tresette.

XXXI

Sánin woke very early on the following day. He found himself on the very apex of human felicity; but that had not prevented his sleeping; the question, the vital, fatal question: how he should sell his estate as speedily as possible, and on the most profitable terms—disturbed his rest. Different plans crossed in his head, but as yet nothing had made itself clear. He left the house to get some air, to freshen himself. He wished to present himself to Gemma with a project already prepared—not otherwise.

What figure was that, decidedly heavy and thick-legged, but neatly clad, walking in front of him, swaying slightly from side to side and limping? Where had he seen that nape, overgrown with tumbled masses of fair hair, that head, which seemed to be set directly on the shoulders, that soft, fat back, those plump, dangling arms? Could it be—Pólozoff, his old boarding-school comrade, whom he had lost sight of for the last five years? Sánin overtook the figure which was

walking in front of him, and turned round. . . . A broad, sallow face, tiny, pig-like blue eyes with white lashes and brows, a round, beardless chin—and that expression of the whole face, indolent and distrustful—yes, in point of fact, it was he, Ippolít Pólozoff.

"Is my star acting again?"—flashed through Sánin's thoughts.

"Pólozoff! Ippolít Sídorovitch! Is it thou?"

The figure halted, lifted its tiny eyes, waited a little, and unsealing its lips at last, said in a hoarse falsetto:

"Dmítry Sánin?"

"The very same!"—cried Sánin, and shook one of Pólozoff's hands; clad in tight glacé gloves, of an ash-grey hue, they hung, as before, lifeless down his fat hips.—"Hast thou been here long? Whence camest thou? Where art thou staying?"

"I came yesterday, from Wiesbaden,"—replied Pólozoff without haste,—"to make purchases for my wife—and am returning to Wiesbaden to-day."

"Akh, yes! thou art married—and, so I hear, to such a beauty!"

Pólozoff turned his eyes away.—"Yes, so they say."

Sánin burst out laughing.—"I see that thou art still the same . . . . phlegmatic fellow as thou wert at school."

"Why should I change?"

"And they say,"—added Sánin, with special emphasis on the word "say,"—"that thy wife is very wealthy."

"They do say that also."

"And can it be that thou dost not know that thyself, Ippolít Sídoritch?"

"I, brother Dmítry . . . . Pávlovitch?—yes, Pávlovitch! don't meddle with my wife's affairs."

"Thou dost not meddle? Not with any affairs?"

Again Pólozoff turned away his eyes.—"Not with any, my dear fellow. She—goes her way . . . . well, and I go mine."

"Whither art thou bound now?"—inquired Sánin.

"Nowhere, just at present; I'm standing in the street—and talking with thee; but when we get through, I shall go to a hotel—and breakfast."

"With me as company—wilt thou?"

"That is—thou art referring to breakfast?"

"Yes."

"Pray do, it will be much jollier to eat together. Thou art not a chatterer, I believe?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, all right then."

Pólozoff moved on. Sánin walked beside him. And it occurred to Sánin—Pólozoff's lips were

sealed once more, he puffed and waddled on in silence—it occurred to Sánin: how had that booby managed to hook a rich and beautiful wife? He himself was neither wealthy, nor distinguished, nor clever: in school he had borne the reputation of an indolent and stupid boy, and for his sleepiness and gluttony had borne the nickname of "the slobberer." Amazing!

"But if his wife is very rich—they say she is the daughter of some contractor—would n't she buy my estate? Although he says that he does not meddle with any of his wife's affairs, it is impossible to believe that! Moreover, I will name a moderate, advantageous price! Why not make the effort? Perhaps this is still my star in the ascendant. . . . Done! I'll try!"

Pólozoff conducted Sánin to one of the best hotels in Frankfurt, in which, of course, he already occupied the best room. The tables and chairs were loaded down with bandboxes, boxes, bundles. . . . "All purchases for Márya Nikoláevna, my dear fellow!" (Ippolít Sídorovitch's wife was named Márya Nikoláevna.) Pólozoff sank into an easy-chair, groaned: "Ekh, how hot it is!" and untied his neckcloth. Then he rang for the head-waiter, and carefully ordered an extremely abundant breakfast. "And let the carriage be ready in an hour! Do you hear, in precisely an hour!"

The head-waiter bowed obsequiously—and withdrew in slavish fashion.

Pólozoff unbuttoned his waistcoat. From the way in which he elevated his eyebrows, panted and wrinkled his nose, it could be seen that talking would be a great burden to him, and that he was waiting, with some trepidation, to see whether Sánin would force him to wag his tongue, or would take upon himself the trouble of carrying on the conversation.

Sánin understood his friend's frame of mind, and consequently did not burden him with questions; he confined himself to the most indispensable; he learned that he had been in the service for two years already—("in the Uhlans! just so; he must look well, I should think, in that bob-tailed uniform!")—had married three years previously,—and this was the second year he had been abroad with his wife, "who was now taking a cure for something or other in Wiesbaden"—and then would set out for Paris. Sánin, on his side, enlarged as little on his past life as on his plans; he went straight to the principal point—that is, he began to talk about his intention to sell his estate.

Pólozoff listened to him in silence, only casting a glance, from time to time, at the door, whence breakfast must make its appearance. At last the breakfast did make its appearance.

The head-waiter, accompanied by two other servants, brought in several dishes under silver covers.

"Is the estate in the Tula government?"—said Pólozoff, as he seated himself at the table, and tucked a napkin into the collar of his shirt.

"Yes."

"In the Efrém district. . . . I know."

"Dost thou know my Alexyéevko?" asked Sánin, as he also seated himself at the table.

"Yes, of course I do."—Pólozoff stuffed a morsel of omelet with truffles into his mouth.—"Márya Nikoláevna—my wife—has an estate in the neighbourhood . . . . uncork that bottle, waiter! The soil is fairly good—only, the peasants have felled thy forest. And why art thou selling it?"

"I need the money, my dear fellow. I would sell it cheap. Thou hadst better buy it . . . by the way."

Pólozoff gulped down a glass of wine, wiped his mouth with his napkin and again set to chewing—slowly and noisily.

"H'm—yes,"—he said at last. "I 'm not buying estates: I have no capital. Pass the butter. Perhaps my wife will buy it. Do thou talk it over with her. If thou dost not ask a great price—she does not disdain that sort of thing. . . . But what asses these Germans are! They don't

know how to boil fish. What could be simpler, apparently? And yet they say: 'The Vaterland must be united!' Waiter, take away this abomination!"

"Does thy wife really manage the property herself?" inquired Sánin.

"Yes. Here, these cutlets are good. I recommend them. I have already told thee, Dmítry Pávlovitch, that I don't meddle with any of my wife's affairs—and now I tell it to thee again."

Pólozoff continued to munch.

"H'm. . . . But how can I talk it over with her, Ippolít Sídoritch?"

"Why, very simply, Dmítry Pávlovitch. Go to Wiesbaden. It's not far from here. Waiter, have n't you any English mustard? No? Beasts! Only, don't lose time. We are leaving the day after to-morrow. Permit me, I will fill your glass: the wine has a bouquet—'t is not sour stuff."

Pólozoff's face had grown animated and crimson; it only grew animated when he ate . . . or drank.

"Really, I don't know how I can do that,"—muttered Sánin.

"But why are you in such a hurry, all of a sudden?"

"That 's it exactly, my dear fellow, I 'm in a hurry."

"And is a large sum needed?"

"Yes. I . . . how shall I tell thee! I am planning . . . . to get married."

Pólozoff set on the table his wine-glass, which he was in the act of raising to his lips.

"To get married?"—he said, in a hoarse voice —hoarse with surprise,—laying his fat hands on his belly.—"In such haste?"

"Yes . . . very soon."

"The bride is in Russia, of course?"

"No, she is not in Russia."

"Where then?"

"Here, in Frankfurt."

"And who is she?"

"A German; that is to say, no—an Italian. A resident of this town."

"With money?"

"Without money."

"So love is very strong?"

"How absurd thou art! Yes, it is strong."

"And thou needest money for that?"

"Well, yes . . . . yes, yes."

Pólozoff swallowed his wine, rinsed out his mouth, washed his hands, wiped them carefully on his napkin, pulled out and lighted a cigar. Sánin stared at him in silence.

"There is one means,"—bellowed Pólozoff at last, throwing back his head, and emitting a slender stream of smoke.—"Go to my wife. If she takes a fancy, she will disperse all thy difficulty offhand."

"But how am I to see her, thy wife? Thou sayest that thou art leaving the day after to-morrow?"

Pólozoff closed his eyes.

"See here, I'll tell thee something,"—he said at last, twisting his cigar about in his lips, and heaving a sigh.—"Go home, dress thyself with all speed—and come hither. In an hour I set out; my carriage is roomy—I'll take thee with me. That's the best way of all. But now I'm going to have a nap. I must always have a nap after eating, my dear fellow. Nature demands it—and I do not resist. And do not thou disturb me."

Sánin pondered and pondered—and suddenly raised his head; he had come to a decision!

"Well, very good, I accept—and I thank thee. At half-past twelve I will be here—and we will set out together for Wiesbaden. I hope thy wife will not be angry. . . . "

But Pólozoff was already snoring. He stammered: "Don't disturb me!"—waggled his legs, and fell asleep like an infant.

Once more Sánin swept a glance over his portly figure, his head, neck, his highly-elevated chin as round as an apple—and, emerging from the hotel . . . he wended his way, with brisk strides, to the Roselli confectionery shop. He must forewarn Gemma.

XXXII

He found her in the shop, with her mother. Frau Lenore was bending over, and with a small folding foot-rule was measuring the space between the windows. On catching sight of Sánin, she straightened up, and greeted him cheerily, yet not without some confusion.

"Ever since your words of yesterday,"—she began,—"ideas have been coursing round in my head as to how we can improve our shop. Here, now, I think we might place two small cases with glass shelves; you know, that is the fashion now. And then, too. . . . "

"Very good, very good . . . . " Sánin interrupted her.—"We must think over all that. . . . But come here, I have something to tell you." He slipped his arms into Frau Lenore's and Gemma's arms, and led them into the other room. Frau Lenore was alarmed, and dropped the foot-rule from her hand. Gemma was on the point of being alarmed also, but took a closer look at Sánin, and recovered her composure. His face was anxious, it is true, but it expressed, at the same time, animated courage and decision.

He begged the two women to sit down, and stood in front of them—and gesticulating with his hands, and ruffling up his hair, he told them

everything: his meeting with Pólozoff, his projected trip to Wiesbaden, the possibility of selling his estate.—"Imagine my happiness,"—he exclaimed at last: "matters have taken such a turn that possibly I may not even be obliged to go to Russia! And we may celebrate the wedding much sooner than I expected!"

"When must you go?"—asked Gemma.

"This very day—an hour hence; my friend has hired a carriage—he will take me."

"You will write to us?"

"Immediately! as soon as I have had a talk with that lady—I will write instantly."

"That lady is very rich, you say?"—asked practical Frau Lenore.

"Extremely! her father was a millionaire—and left her everything."

"Everything—to her alone? Well—that 's lucky for you! Only, look out, don't cheapen your estate! Be sensible and firm. Don't get carried away! I understand your wish to become Gemma's husband as promptly as possible . . . . but caution, before all else! Don't forget that the more dearly you sell your estate, the more will remain for you two—and for your children."

Gemma turned away, and Sánin began again to flourish his hands.—"You may feel assured of my caution, Frau Lenore! But I am not going to bargain. I will tell her the real price: if she will give it—good; if she will not—I don't care."

"Are you acquainted with her—with that lady?" asked Gemma.

"I have never set eyes on her."

"And when shall you return?"

"If our business comes to nothing—the day after to-morrow; but if all goes well, I may be obliged to stay an extra day or two. In any case, I shall not linger a single moment. For am not I leaving my soul behind me here? However, I have talked too long with you, and I must run home before I start. . . . Give me your hand for luck, Frau Lenore—we always do that in Russia."

"The right or the left?"

"The left—it is nearer the heart. I will present myself the day after to-morrow—with my shield or on it! Something tells me I shall return a victor! Good-bye, my kind, my dear . . . ones. . . ."

He embraced and kissed Frau Lenore, but asked Gemma to come into her room with him—for a moment—he must communicate to her something very important. He simply wished to take leave of her in private. Frau Lenore understood this—and did not seek to learn what that very important thing was. . . .

Never before had Sánin been in Gemma's chamber. All the enchantment of love, all its fire, and rapture, and sweet dread—fairly flamed up within him, and forced its way into his soul,

as soon as he crossed that sacred threshold. . . . He cast a glance of emotion round about him, fell at the feet of the dear girl, and pressed his face to her form . . . .

"Thou art mine?"—she whispered—"thou wilt return soon?"

"I am thine. . . . I will return,"—he repeated, sighing.

"I will wait for thee, my dear one!"

A few moments later, Sánin was running along the street to his quarters. He did not even notice that Pantaleone had sprung out of the door of the confectionery shop after him, all dishevelled—and shouted something at him, and shook his hand, raised high aloft, and, seemingly, menaced him with it.

Precisely at a quarter to one, Sánin presented himself to Pólozoff. The carriage was already standing at the gate of his hotel, with four horses harnessed to it. And catching sight of Sánin, Pólozoff merely said: "Ah! he has made up his mind?" and donning his hat, cloak and overshoes, and stuffing cotton in his ears although it was summer, he came out on the steps. The waiters, at his command, arranged all his numerous purchases inside the carriage, encircled the place where he was to sit with silken cushions, little bags, parcels, placed at his feet a box of provisions and tied his trunk to the coachman's seat.

Pólozoff paid his reckoning with a lavish hand, —and although he was hoisted from behind, but respectfully, by the officious door-porter, he clambered, grunting, into the carriage, took his seat, stirred up everything around him thoroughly, selected and lighted a cigar—and only then did he beckon to Sánin with his finger, as much as to say: "Get in also, thou!" Sánin seated himself by his side. Pólozoff, through the door-porter, ordered the postilion to drive properly, if he wished to get drink-money; the carriage steps rattled, the door slammed, the carriage rolled off.

XXXIII

From Frankfurt to Wiesbaden nowadays, by the railway, is less than an hour's journey; at that time, the extra-post managed to reach it in three hours. The horses were changed five times. Pólozoff partly dozed, partly swayed about, holding his cigar in his teeth, and talked very little; he never once looked out of the window: he took no interest in picturesque views, and even announced that—"nature was death to him!" Sánin also maintained silence, and also failed to admire the views: he was not in a mood for that. He surrendered himself wholly to meditations, memories. At the posting-stations, Pólozoff paid accurately, took note of the time by his watch, and rewarded the postilions—with little

or much—according to their zeal. At the middle of the journey, he took two oranges from the box of eatables, and, having chosen the best, he offered the other to Sánin. Sánin gazed intently at his fellow-traveller, and suddenly burst out laughing.

"What art thou laughing at?"—asked the latter, carefully peeling the skin from the orange with his short, white nails.

"What am I laughing at?"—repeated Sánin. —"Why, at our journey."

"What of it?"—queried Pólozoff, in his turn, dropping into his mouth, one after another, the oblong portions into which the meat of an orange divides.

"It's very queer. Yesterday, I must confess, I was thinking as little of thee as of the Emperor of China,—and to-day I am driving with thee, to sell my property to thy wife, of whom I have not the slightest conception."

"All sorts of things happen,"—replied Pólozoff. "If thou only livest long enough,—thou wilt see every sort of thing. For instance, canst thou imagine me riding as an orderly-officer? But I have; and the Grand Duke Mikhaíl Pávlovitch gave the command: 'At a trot, that fat cornet is to ride at a trot! Hasten thy trot!'"

Sánin scratched behind his ear.

"Tell me, please, Ippolít Sídoritch, what is thy wife like? What sort of disposition has

she? For it is necessary that I should know, you see."

"It was all well enough for him to command: 'At a trot!'"—interposed Pólozoff, with sudden vehemence,—"but me, how about me? And I thought: 'Take your ranks and epaulets to yourself, I don't want them!' Yes . . . thou wert asking about my wife? What 's my wife like? —A human being, like everybody else. Don't stir her up—she does n't like that. The chief thing is—talk as much as possible . . . . let there be something to laugh at. Tell about your love, for instance . . . and as amusingly as possible, you know."

"What dost thou mean by 'as amusingly as possible'?"

"Why, just that. For thou hast told me that thou art in love, that thou wishest to marry. Well, then, describe it."

Sánin took offence.—"What dost thou find ridiculous in that?"

Pólozoff merely rolled his eyes about. The juice from the orange was trickling down his chin.

"Was it thy wife who sent thee to Frankfurt to make purchases?"—asked Sánin a little while later.

"She herself."

"What were those purchases?"

"Toys, of course."

"Toys? hast thou children?"

Pólozoff even drew away from Sánin.—"The idea! Why should I have any children? Feminine gewgaws. . . . Finery. In the department of the toilet."

"Art thou really an expert in that line?"

"I am."

"But didst not thou tell me that thou didst not meddle with any of thy wife's affairs?"

"I don't meddle with anything else. But this . . . does n't count. Out of tedium—I may do that. And moreover, my wife has confidence in my taste. And I 'm keen at bargaining."

Pólozoff began to talk brokenly: he was already fatigued.

"And is thy wife very rich?"

"Yes, she 's rich. Only, chiefly for herself."

"But, apparently, thou hast no cause for complaint?"

"That 's why I 'm her husband. The idea of my not getting the good of it! And I 'm a useful man to her: she finds it an advantage to have me! I 'm—convenient!"

Pólozoff wiped his face with a silk handkerchief, and panted heavily; as much as to say: "Spare me; don't make me utter any more words. Thou seest how difficult it is for me."

Sánin left him in peace—and again plunged into meditation.

The hotel in Wiesbaden before which the carriage drew up smacked of a regular palace. Little bells immediately began to jingle in its depths, a bustle and running to and fro arose; comely men, in black dress-suits, ran to the chief entrance; a door-porter, shimmering with gold, threw open the carriage-door with a flourish.

Pólozoff alighted like some conqueror, and began to ascend the staircase, all spread with carpet, and perfumed. A man, also capitally-well-dressed, but with a Russian face, flew to meet him —his valet. Pólozoff remarked to him that henceforth he should always take him with him, —for on the day before, in Frankfurt, he, Pólozoff, had been left for the night without warm water! The valet depicted horror on his countenance—and, bending alertly down, he removed his master's overshoes.

"Is Márya Nikoláevna at home?"—asked Pólozoff.

"Yes, sir. She is dressing. She is going to dine at Countess Lasúnsky's."

"Ah! with that . . . . Stay! There are things yonder in the carriage; take everything out thyself, and bring them in. And do thou, Dmítry Pávlovitch,"—added Pólozoff,—"engage a room for thyself, and come to me in three quarters of an hour. We will dine together."

Pólozoff went his way, and Sánin asked for the plainest room they had; and having ad-

justed his toilet, and rested a little, he betook himself to the vast suite of rooms occupied by his Transparency (Durchlaucht), Prince von Pólozoff.

He found that "prince" seated in a sumptuous velvet arm-chair, in the middle of the most magnificent sort of a salon. Sánin's phlegmatic friend had already managed to take a bath, and array himself in the richest of satin dressing-gowns; on his head he had set a crimson fez. Sánin advanced to him, and surveyed him for a while. Pólozoff was sitting motionless as an idol; he did not even turn his face to one side, he did not even move an eyebrow, he did not emit a sound. The spectacle was, in very truth, majestic! After having admired him for a couple of minutes, Sánin was on the point of speaking, of breaking that sacred silence—when suddenly the door from an adjoining room opened, and on the threshold appeared a young, handsome lady, in a white silk gown trimmed with black lace, with diamonds on her arms and on her neck—Márya Nikoláevna Pólozoff in person! Her thick, ruddy-gold hair fell on both sides of her head—in tresses which were plaited but not pinned up.

XXXIV

"Akh, pardon me!"—she said, with a half-confused, half-mocking smile, instantly seizing the

end of one plait in her hand, and riveting her large, brilliant grey eyes on Sánin.—"I did not think you had come yet."

"Sánin, Dmítry Pávlovitch, the friend of my childhood," said Pólozoff, as before—not turning toward him, and not rising, but pointing at him with his finger.

"Yes, I know. . . . Thou hast already told me. I am very glad to make your acquaintance. But I wanted to ask thee, Ippolít Sídoritch. . . . My maid is rather stupid to-day . . . . "

"To pin up thy hair?"

"Yes, yes, please. Excuse me,"—repeated Márya Nikoláevna, with her former smile, nodding her head at Sánin, and wheeling swiftly round, disappeared through the door, leaving behind her a fleeting but stately impression of a charming neck, wonderful shoulders, a wonderful figure.

Pólozoff rose, and waddling cumbrously, passed through the same door.

Sánin did not, for one moment, doubt that his presence in "Prince Pólozoff's" drawing-room was known to its mistress; the whole trick lay in displaying her hair, which really was fine. Sánin even inwardly rejoiced at this prank on Madame Pólozoff's part: "If she wanted to astound me," he said to himself, "to shine in my presence—perhaps, who knows? she will be yielding in the matter of the price of my estate."

His soul was so filled with Gemma that all other women possessed no significance whatever for him: he hardly noticed them; and on this occasion he confined himself to thinking: "Yes, I was told the truth: she is a lady of the first quality!"

But had he not been in such an exceptional spiritual condition, he would, in all probability, have expressed himself differently: Márya Nikoláevna Pólozoff, born Kolýshkin, was a very remarkable person. Not that she was an acknowledged beauty: the traces of her plebeian origin were even quite distinctly visible. Her brow was low, her nose somewhat fleshy and turned up, she could boast neither delicacy of complexion, nor elegance of hands and feet—but what did all that matter? Not before "a goddess of beauty," as Púshkin says, would any one pause who met her, but before the powerful witchery of a blooming feminine body, not exactly Russian, nor yet exactly Gipsy . . . . and he would not have paused involuntarily!

But Gemma's image protected Sánin, like that triple armour of which the poets sing.

Ten minutes later, Márya Nikoláevna made her appearance again, accompanied by her spouse. She went up to Sánin . . . and her walk was such that some eccentric persons, in those, alas! already distant days, would have gone out of their minds at that walk alone. "That woman, when she comes toward thee,

seems to be bringing the whole happiness of thy life to meet thee,"—one of them was wont to say. She walked up to Sánin, offered him her hand, said in her caressing and, as it were, repressed voice, in Russian: "You will wait for me, will you not? I shall return soon."

Sánin bowed respectfully, and Márya Nikoláevna disappeared behind the portière of the entrance door—and, as she vanished, turned her head back, over her shoulder,—and smiled again, and again left behind her a harmonious impression, as before.

When she smiled—not one, not two, but three dimples made their appearance on each cheek—and her eyes smiled more than her lips, than her long, rosy, luscious lips, with two tiny moles on the left side.

Pólozoff lumbered into the room,—and again placed himself in the easy-chair. He preserved silence, as before; but a strange grin distended, from time to time, his colourless and already wrinkled cheeks.

He looked like an old man, although he was only three years older than Sánin.

The dinner to which he treated his guest would, of course, have satisfied the most exacting gastronomist, but to Sánin it appeared interminable, intolerable! Pólozoff ate slowly, "with feeling, with understanding, with pauses," bending attentively over his plate, sniffing at al-

most every morsel: first he would rinse out his mouth with wine, and then swallow and smack his lips. . . And after the roast, he suddenly began to talk—but about what? About merino sheep, a whole flock of which he was intending to import, and in such detail, using constantly diminutive nouns, with such tenderness! After drinking a cup of boiling hot coffee,—(he had several times reminded the waiter, in a tearfully-irritated voice, that he had been served on the previous evening with cold coffee—cold as ice!)—and having bitten off the tip of a Havana cigar with his yellow, crooked teeth—he relapsed into a doze, after his custom, to the great joy of Sánin, who began to walk back and forth, with inaudible footsteps, on the soft carpet—and dream about how he would live with Gemma, and with what news he should return to her. Pólozoff, however, awoke earlier than usual, according to his own statement,—he had slept only an hour and a half,—and having drunk a glass of iced seltzer water, and swallowed about eight spoonfuls of preserves, Russian preserves, which his valet brought to him in a dark-green, genuine "Kíeff"[1] glass jar, and without which, as he said, he could not exist—he fixed his puffy eyes on Sánin and asked him whether he would not like to play at "fool" with him?[2] Sánin gladly as-

[1] The preserves made in Kíeff are famous.—Translator.
[2] A very simple card game.—Translator.

sented; he was afraid that Pólozoff might begin to talk about the rams again, and about ewe lambs, and nice little fat sheep-tails. Host and guest went into the drawing-room, the waiter brought cards,—and the game began, not for money, as a matter of course.

Márya Nikoláevna found them at this innocent diversion, when she returned from Countess Lasúnsky's.

She laughed aloud, as soon as she entered the room, and caught sight of the cards, and the outspread *l'ombre* table. Sánin sprang up from his seat, but she exclaimed: "Sit down, go on playing.—I will change my gown, and return to you" —and again vanished, rustling her dress, and drawing off her gloves as she went.

She did, in fact, return very soon. She had changed her festive array for a full, loose silk gown, of lilac hue, with open, hanging sleeves; a thick, twisted cord encircled her waist. She seated herself beside her husband,—and waiting until he had been beaten, she said to him: "Come, Puffy, that will do!"—(at the word "Puffy," Sánin cast a glance of surprise at her—and she smiled back gaily, answering his glance with a glance, and displaying all the dimples in her cheeks)—"that will do; I see that thou art sleepy; kiss my hand, and go to bed; Mr. Sánin and I will chat together."

"I'm not sleepy,"—said Pólozoff, rising lum-

beringly from his chair,—"but as for going to bed —I'll go, and I'll kiss thy hand." She offered him her palm, without ceasing to smile and to glance at Sánin.

Pólozoff also glanced at him—and went off, without saying good night.

"Come, tell me your story, tell me,"—said Márya Nikoláevna with animation, placing both bare elbows simultaneously on the table, and impatiently tapping the nails of one hand against the nails of the other.—"Are you really going to be married, as I am told?"

As she uttered these words, Márya Nikoláevna even inclined her head a little on one side, in order that she might look Sánin the more intently and keenly in the eye.

XXXV

Madame Pólozoff's free and easy behaviour would, in all probability, have disconcerted Sánin at first—although he was no novice, and had already rubbed up against people—if in that very freedom and familiarity he had not discerned another good omen for his enterprise. "I'll humour the caprices of this wealthy lady,"—he decided in his own mind,—and answered her with an unconstraint equal to that with which she had put the question:—"Yes, I'm going to be married."

"To whom? To a foreigner?"

"Yes."

"You have not known her long? In Frankfurt?"

"Exactly so."

"And who is she? May one inquire?"

"One may. She is the daughter of a confectioner."

Márya Nikoláevna opened her eyes very widely, and elevated her brows.

"Why, that is delightful,"—she said in a drawling tone—"that's splendid! I had supposed that there were no longer any such young men as you in the world. The daughter of a confectioner!"

"I see that that surprises you,"—remarked Sánin, not without dignity; "but, in the first place, I have none of those prejudices . . . ."

"*In the first place,* that does not surprise me in the least,"—interrupted Márya Nikoláevna—"I have no prejudices either. I myself am the daughter of a peasant. Hey? What do you think of that? I am surprised and delighted that here is a man who is not afraid to love. For you do love her, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Is she very handsome?"

Sánin winced a little at this last question. . . . However, there was no drawing back now.

"You know, Márya Nikoláevna,"—he began

—"that to every man the face of his beloved appears superior to all others; but my bride is a genuine beauty."

"Really? In what style? the Italian? the antique?"

"Yes; she has very regular features."

"Have you her portrait with you?"

"No!" (At that date, there was no idea of such a thing as photographs. Daguerreotypes had hardly begun to be generally known.)

"What is her name?"

"Her name is—Gemma."

"And what is yours?"

"Dmítry."

"And your patronymic?"

"Pávlovitch."

"Do you know,"—said Márya Nikoláevna, still in the same drawling tone,—"I like you very much, Dmítry Pávlovitch. You must be a fine man. Come, give me your hand. Let us be friends."

She pressed his hand warmly, with her beautiful, white, strong fingers. Her hand was somewhat smaller than his—but much warmer and smoother, and softer and more feminine.

"Only, do you know what has come into my head?"

"What?"

"You will not be angry? No? She is your

betrothed bride, you say. But is that . . . . is that imperatively necessary?"

Sánin frowned.—"I do not understand you, Márya Nikoláevna."

Márya Nikoláevna broke into a soft laugh—and shaking her head, she tossed back her hair, which had fallen over her face.—"Positively—he is charming,"—she said, in a half-thoughtful, half-absent-minded way.—"A knight! After that, just believe, if you will, the people who assert that all the idealists have died out!"

Márya Nikoláevna, all this while, had been talking Russian in a wonderfully-pure, genuine Moscow language—of a popular, not a noble cast.

"You certainly must have been reared at home, in an old-fashioned, God-fearing family? To what government do you belong?"

"Tula."

"Well! then we are pigs of the same trough. My father. . . . Of course, you know who my father was?"

"Yes, I know."

"He was born in Tula. . . He was a Tula man. Well, very good." (Márya Nikoláevna pronounced that "very good" in petty-burgher fashion, with deliberate intent—thus: *'kher-shóo.*)[1] "Well, now let's get to business."

[1] The usual pronunciation would be *khoroshó*—with the first two *o's* resembling *a's*.—TRANSLATOR.

"That is . . . what do you mean by getting to business? What are you pleased to designate by that?"

Márya Nikoláevna narrowed her eyes.—"Why, what did you come hither for?" (When she narrowed her eyes, their expression became very caressing and somewhat mocking; but when she opened them to their full extent, in their brilliant, almost chilly gleam, there shone forth something evil . . . . something menacing. Especial beauty was imparted to her eyes by her eyebrows, which were thick, rather close together, genuine sable brows.) "Do you wish me to buy your estate? You need money for your wedding? Is n't that the case?"

"Yes, I do need money."

"And do you require much?"

"For my first needs, I might content myself with a few thousand francs. Your husband is acquainted with my estate. You might consult with him,—and I would ask a low price."

Márya Nikoláevna moved her head to the right and to the left.—"*In—the—first—place,*" she began, pausing between her words, tapping the flaps of Sánin's coat with her fingers—"I am not accustomed to consult my husband, unless it be in regard to my toilet—he 's a fine hand at that; and, *in—the—second—place*, why do you say that you would set a low price on it? I do not wish to take advantage of the fact that you are in

love, and ready to make any sacrifice. . . . I will accept no sacrifices from you. How would this do? Instead of encouraging . . . well, how can I best express it? noble sentiments in you, I am to strip you bare as a linden-tree, am I?[1] That is not my habit. When it so happens, I do not spare people—only, it is not in that way."

Sánin could in no wise understand whether she was laughing at him, or talking seriously, and merely thought to himself: "Oh, yes, one must be on the alert with thee!"

A servant entered with a Russian samovár, a tea-service, cream, rusks, and so forth, and a large tray, set out all these blessings on the table between Sánin and Madame Pólozoff,—and withdrew.

She poured him out a cup of tea.—"You will not disdain it?"—she asked, dropping the sugar into the cup with her fingers, although the sugar-tongs lay there at hand.

"Good gracious, no! . . . From such a lovely hand . . . "

He did not finish the phrase, and almost choked himself with a mouthful of tea, while she gazed attentively and brightly at him.

"I mentioned a low price for my estate,"—he went on,—"because, as you are now abroad, I

[1] The linden is stripped of its bark to make plaited peasant-slippers, bath-sponges, and mat-sacks—corresponding to burlaps—in which everything from cherries to sheet-iron is wrapped.—TRANSLATOR.

cannot assume that you have much ready cash, and, in conclusion, I feel myself that the sale . . . or purchase of an estate, under such conditions—is something abnormal, and that I ought to take that into consideration."

Sánin became confused, and lost his head, but Márya Nikoláevna leaned back quietly against the back of her chair, crossed her arms, and gazed at him with the same intent and brilliant glance as before. At last, he ceased speaking.

"Never mind; go on, go on talking,"—she said, as though coming to his assistance: "I am listening to you—I find it agreeable to listen to you; speak on."

Sánin began to describe his estate, the number of *desyatínas*[1] it contained, where it was situated, and what profits could be derived from it . . . . he even alluded to the picturesque location of the manor-house; and Márya Nikoláevna gazed and gazed at him, with ever-increasing brightness and intentness, and her lips moved slightly, without a smile: she was biting them. He felt awkward, at last; he relapsed into silence for the second time.

"Dmítry Pávlovitch," began Márya Nikoláevna—and grew pensive. . . . "Dmítry Pávlovitch,"—she repeated.—"See here: I am convinced that the purchase of your estate would be a very profitable affair for mè, and that we shall

[1] A *desyatína* is 2.70 acres.—Translator.

come to an agreement; but you must give me two days,—yes, two days' grace. You can bear separation from your betrothed for a couple of days, I suppose? I will not detain you longer, against your will—I give you my word of honour. But if you now need five or six thousand francs, I am ready to lend them to you, with great pleasure—and we will settle the account later on."

Sánin rose.—"I must thank you, Márya Nikoláevna, for your kind and amiable readiness to be of service to a man who is almost a stranger to you. . . . But if you imperatively insist, then I prefer to await your decision as to my estate—I will remain here two days."

"Yes; I do, Dmítry Pávlovitch. And will it be very oppressive for you? Very? Tell me."

"I love my betrothed, Márya Nikoláevna—it is not easy for me to be parted from her."

"Akh, you man of gold!"—ejaculated Márya Nikoláevna with a sigh. "I promise not to weary you too much. Are you going?"

"It is late,"—remarked Sánin.

"And you must rest after the journey—and from the game at 'fool' with my husband. Tell me—are you and Ippolít Sídoritch, my husband, great friends?"

"We were brought up in the same boarding-school."

"And was he like that then?"

"Like what?"—inquired Sánin.

Márya Nikoláevna suddenly burst out laughing, and laughed until her whole face was crimson, raised her handkerchief to her lips, rose from her chair,—and swaying, as with fatigue, she advanced to Sánin, and offered him her hand.

He bowed—and went toward the door.

"Be so good as to present yourself very early to-morrow,—do you hear?"—she called after him. He glanced back, as he quitted the room—and perceived that she had dropped into her armchair once more, and had thrown both arms behind her head. The wide sleeves of her wrapper fell back almost to her shoulders—and it was impossible not to acknowledge that the pose of those arms, that whole figure, was enchantingly beautiful.

XXXVI

The lamp in Sánin's room burned long after midnight. He sat at his table, writing to "his Gemma." He told her everything; he described to her the Pólozoffs—husband and wife—but enlarged chiefly on his own feelings,—and ended by appointing a tryst three days hence! ! ! (with three exclamation points). Early in the morning, he took that letter to the post, and went for a stroll in the garden of the Kurhaus, where the music was already playing. There were few people as yet; he stood for a while in front of the

arbour in which the orchestra was located, listened to a potpourri from "Robert le Diable,"—and after drinking coffee, he betook himself to a lonely side-alley, sat down on a bench,—and fell into thought.

The handle of a parasol tapped him briskly—and rather vehemently—on the shoulder. He started. . . . In front of him, in a light-green barège gown, a white tulle hat, and suède gloves, fresh and rosy as a summer morning, but with the softness of untroubled slumber not yet vanished from her movements and her glance, stood Márya Nikoláevna.

"Good morning," said she. "I sent for you this morning, but you had already gone out. I have only just drunk my second glass—they make me drink the water here, you know—God knows why . . . am not I well? And so I must walk for a whole hour. Will you be my companion? And then we will drink coffee."

"I have already drunk mine,"—said Sánin, rising; "but I shall be very glad to walk with you."

"Well, then give me your arm. . . . Have no fear; your betrothed is not here—she will not see you."

Sánin smiled constrainedly. He experienced an unpleasant sensation every time that Márya Nikoláevna mentioned Gemma. Nevertheless, he bowed hastily and obediently . . . . Márya

Nikoláevna's arm sank slowly and softly on his arm,—and slid along it, and, as it were, clung to it.

"Let us go in this direction,"—she said to him, throwing her open parasol over her shoulder. "I am quite at home in this park: I will lead you to the pretty spots. And do you know what (she frequently used these words)—"you and I will not talk about that purchase now; we will discuss it thoroughly after breakfast; but now you must tell me about yourself . . . that I may know with whom I am dealing. And afterward, if you like, I will tell you about myself. Do you agree?"

"But, Márya Nikoláevna, what interest can you take . . . . "

"Stop, stop. You did not understand me rightly. I do not wish to flirt with you."—Márya Nikoláevna shrugged her shoulders.—"He has a bride like an antique statue, and I will flirt with him! But you have wares—and I am a merchant. And I want to know what wares you have. Come, then, show what they are like! I want to know, not only what I am buying, but the person from whom I am buying. That was my father's rule. Come, begin. . . Well, if not with your childhood—here now—have you been long abroad? And where have you been up to the present time? Only, walk more slowly—there is no need for us to hurry."

"I came hither from Italy, where I spent several months."

"And everything Italian has, evidently, a special attraction for you? 'T is strange that you did not find the object of your affections there. Are you fond of art? of pictures? or are you more fond of music?"

"I am fond of art. . . . And I love all that is beautiful."

"And music?"

"And music also."

"And I don't love it at all. Only Russian songs please me—and that in the country, in spring—with dancing, you know. . . . Red cotton gowns, pearl fringes on the headdresses, the young grass in the pastures, an odour of smoke . . . splendid! But the question is not of me. Speak, narrate."

Márya Nikoláevna rambled on, and kept glancing at Sánin. She was tall—her face came almost on a level with his face.

He began to narrate—at first reluctantly, bunglingly—but afterward he talked a great deal, even chattered. Márya Nikoláevna listened in a very clever way; and moreover, she appeared to be so frank herself that she involuntarily evoked frankness in others. She possessed that great gift of "familiarity"—*le terrible don de la familiarité,*—to which Cardinal Retz alludes. Sánin talked about his travels, his so-

journ in Petersburg, his youth. . . . Had Márya Nikoláevna been a fashionable lady, with refined manners, he never would have let himself go like that; but she called herself "a good fellow, who would not tolerate any ceremony"; those were precisely the words in which she described herself to Sánin. And, at the same time, the "good fellow" walked beside him with a catlike tread, slightly leaning toward him, and gazing up into his face;—and in the form of a young person of the female sex, from whom emanated that intoxicating and languorous, quiet and burning seduction, wherewith certain Slavonic natures—and those not the pure ones, but with the proper admixture—are able to torment us weak, sinful men!

Sánin's stroll with Márya Nikoláevna, Sánin's chat with Márya Nikoláevna, lasted more than an hour. And never once did they halt; they kept on walking, walking along the endless alleys of the park, now ascending a hill, and admiring the view, now descending into a valley, and hiding themselves in impenetrable shadow—and all the time arm in arm. At intervals, Sánin even felt vexed with himself: never had he walked so long with Gemma, his dear Gemma . . . . and here, this lady had simply taken possession of him — and that was all there was to say! — "Aren't you tired?"—he asked her once.—"I am never tired,"—she replied. Once in a while,

they met other ramblers; almost all of them bowed to her,—some respectfully, others even with servility. To one of them, a very handsome, foppishly attired dark-haired man, she called from a distance, in the very best Parisian accent: "*Comte, vous savez, il ne faut pas venir me voir —ni aujourd'hui, ni demain.*" The man doffed his hat, in silence, and made her a profound salute.

"Who is that?"—asked Sánin, in accordance with the bad habit peculiar to all Russians, "asking curious questions."

"That? A Frenchman—there are a lot of them roaming about here. . . . He . . . also is an admirer of mine. But it is time to drink coffee. Let us go home; I think you must be starved by this time. My hubby[1] must have got his peepers opened by now."

"Hubby! peepers!" Sánin repeated to himself. . . . "And she speaks French so capitally. . . . What a queer person!"

Márya Nikoláevna was not mistaken. When she and Sánin reached the hotel,—her "hubby" or "Puffy" was already seated, with his inevitable fez on his head, at a table spread for breakfast.

"I've been waiting for thee this long time!"

[1] Untranslatable. Literally, "My orthodox believer."—Translator.

he exclaimed, with a sour visage. "I was just about to drink coffee without thee."

"Never mind, never mind," — responded Márya Nikoláevna gaily.—"Art thou angry? That 's healthy for thee: otherwise, thou wouldst congeal altogether. Here, I have brought a guest. Ring at once! Let me drink coffee—the very best coffee—in Saxony cups, on a snow-white table-cloth!"

She threw off her hat, her gloves, and clapped her hands. Pólozoff darted a sidelong glance at her.

"What made you gallop about so long to-day, Márya Nikoláevna?"—he said, in an undertone.

"That 's no affair of yours, Ippolít Sídoritch! Ring the bell! Sit down, Dmítry Pávlovitch—and drink coffee for the second time! Akh! how jolly it is to give orders! There is no other pleasure on earth!"

"When people obey,"—growled her husband again.

"Precisely, when people obey! That 's why I find it jolly. Especially with thee. Is n't that so, Puffy? And here comes the coffee."

On the huge tray with which the waiter made his appearance, lay also the theatrical programme. Márya Nikoláevna seized it.

"A drama!"—she ejaculated with indignation:—"German drama. Never mind; that 's better than German comedy. Order a box to be

engaged for me—a *baignoire*—or no . . . the *Fremden-loge* will be better,"—she said to the waiter. "Do you hear: the *Fremden-loge,* without fail!"

"But what if the *Fremden-loge* is already taken by his Excellency the town-director—(*Seine Excellenz der Herr Stadt-Director*)?"—the waiter ventured to observe.

"Give his Excellency ten thalers—and let me have the box! Do you hear!"

The waiter bowed his head submissively and sadly.

"Dmítry Pávlovitch, will you go to the theatre with me? the German actors are horrible,—but you will go. . . . Yes? Yes! How amiable you are! Thou wilt not go, wilt thou, Puffy?"

"As thou commandest,"—said Pólozoff into his cup, which he was raising to his mouth.

"Dost know what: stay here. Thou always fallest asleep in the theatre,—and thou understandest German badly. This is what thou hadst better do: write a reply to the steward—thou rememberest, about our mill . . . about the peasants' grinding. Tell him that I won't, I won't, I won't! There's occupation for thee, for the whole evening."

"I obey,"—remarked Pólozoff.

"Well, very good indeed. Thou art a clever dear. And now, gentlemen, seeing that we have mentioned the steward, let us discuss our main

business. As soon as the waiter has cleared the table, you shall tell us everything about your estate, Dmítry Pávlovitch—what, how, at what price you will sell it, how much earnest-money you want in advance,—in a word, everything!" ("At last!" thought Sánin,—"thank God!")—"You have already communicated to me some details; you described your park splendidly, I remember—but Puffy was not present. . . . Let him hear about it—he always finds some fault! It is very pleasant to me to think that I can help on your marriage—and I promised you that we would occupy ourselves with you after breakfast; and I always keep my promises;—is n't that so, Ippolít Sídoritch?"

Pólozoff rubbed his face with the palm of his hand.—"What is true is true; you deceive no one."

"Never! and I never will deceive any one. Come, Dmítry Pávlovitch,—state the case, as we express ourselves in the senate."

XXXVII

Sánin set to work to "state the case,"—that is, to describe his estate again, for the second time, but on this occasion, without touching on the beauties of nature—and from time to time appealing to Pólozoff for confirmation of the "facts and figures" quoted. But Pólozoff

merely grinned and shook his head—whether in approbation or disapprobation, was a point which, apparently, the devil himself could not have determined. However, Márya Nikoláevna did not need his sympathy. She displayed such commercial and administrative capacities as could but evoke amazement! The most petty details of estate management were excellently well known to her; she put accurate questions about everything, she ventured into everything; her every word hit the mark, placed the dot directly on the *i*. Sánin had not anticipated such an examination: he had not prepared himself. And this examination lasted for a whole hour and a half. Sánin experienced all the sensations of a criminal on trial, seated on the narrow bench before a stern, a keen judge. "Why, this is an inquisition!" he whispered anxiously to himself. Márya Nikoláevna laughed the whole time, as though she were jesting: but Sánin derived no relief from that; and when, in the course of the "inquisition," it appeared that he did not understand quite clearly the words "repartition" and "tillage"—he fairly broke into perspiration.

"Well, very good!"—said Márya Nikoláevna decisively at last. "Now I know about your estate. What price do you fix per soul?" (At that time, as every one knows, the price of estates was fixed according to the number of serfs.)

"Why . . . . I think . . . I cannot take less

than five hundred rubles"—articulated Sánin with difficulty. (Oh, Pantaleone, Pantaleone, where art thou? Here's the point where thou shouldst have cried out once more: "*Barbari!*")

Márya Nikoláevna rolled her eyes heavenward, as though absorbed in thought.

"Certainly,"—she said at last. "That price seems to me unobjectionable. But I stipulated for two days' grace,—and you must wait until to-morrow. I think we shall come to terms—and then you shall say how much cash down you want. But now, *basta così!*"—she interpolated, perceiving that Sánin was on the point of making some reply.—"We have occupied ourselves enough with the despicable metal . . . *à demain les affaires!* Do you know what: I will let you go now . . . . " (she glanced at an enamelled watch which was thrust into her belt) . . . . "until three o'clock . . . I must give you time to rest. Go, play at roulette."

"I never play at gambling games,"—remarked Sánin.

"Really? why, you are the pink of perfection! But I do not play either. It is foolish to fling one's money to the winds—on a certainty. But go into the gaming-room, look at the physiognomies. There are some very amusing ones. There is one old woman there, with a gold chain on her forehead, and moustaches—a marvel! One of our princes is there—he's nice also. A majestic fig-

ure, a nose like an eagle's beak, and he puts on a thaler—and crosses himself on the sly under his waistcoat. Read the newspapers, walk about, in short, do whatever you like. . . . And at three o'clock I shall expect you . . . . *de pied ferme.* We must dine early. The theatre with these ridiculous Germans begins at half-past six."—She offered him her hand.—"*Sans rancune, n'est-ce pas?*"

"Good gracious, Márya Nikoláevna, why should I be vexed with you?"

"Because I have been torturing you. Wait, I'll do it in a different way"—she added, narrowing her eyes,—and all her dimples came into sight simultaneously in her flushed cheeks.—"Until we meet again!"

Sánin bowed and left the room. A merry laugh rang out behind him—and in a mirror, which he was passing at the moment, the following scene was reflected: Márya Nikoláevna was pushing her husband's fez down over his eyes, and he was resisting with both hands.

XXXVIII

Oh, how deeply and joyously did Sánin draw breath, as soon as he found himself in his own chamber! In point of fact, Márya Nikoláevna had spoken the truth, when she had said that he ought to rest,—to rest from all those new ac-

quaintances, encounters, conversations, from that haze which had got into his head, his soul; from that unexpected, unsought friendship with a woman who was so foreign to him! And when was all this taking place? Almost on the very day after the one on which he had learned that Gemma loved him, that he had become her betrothed husband! Why, that was sacrilege! A thousand times he mentally asked forgiveness of his pure, unspotted dove—although, as a matter of fact, he could not accuse himself of anything; a thousand times he kissed the little cross which had been given to him. Had he not had a hope of bringing to a speedy and successful end the affair for which he had come to Wiesbaden,—he would have rushed headlong thence, back to dear Frankfurt, to that precious house, now already a home to him, to her, to her beloved feet. . . . But there was nothing to be done! He must drain the phial to the bottom, he must dress himself, go to dinner—and thence to the theatre. . . . If she would only release him as promptly as possible on the morrow!

One other thing troubled him, enraged him: he had thought with love, with emotion, with noble rapture of Gemma, of life in her society, of the happiness which was awaiting him in the future—and yet this strange woman, this Madame Pólozoff, kept importunately hovering—bobbing up . . . . precisely that, Sánin expressed him-

self with peculiar viciousness—*bobbing up* in front of his eyes—and he could not rid himself of her image, he could not help hearing her voice and recalling her speeches—he could not even help being conscious of that peculiar perfume, delicate, fresh, and penetrating, like the perfume of yellow lilies, which emanated from her garments. That lady was plainly making a fool of him, and making advances to him in all sorts of ways. . . . Why? what did she want? Could it be the mere whim of a spoiled, rich, and almost immoral woman? And that husband? What sort of a creature was he? What were his relations to her? Why did those questions crawl into the head of him, Sánin, who really cared nothing whatever for Mr. Pólozoff or his wife? Why could not he banish that pertinacious image, even when he turned, with all his soul, to another, as bright and clear as God's day? How dared *those* features shine through those others, which were almost divine? And they not only did shine through—they smiled audaciously. Those grey, rapacious eyes, those dimples on the cheeks, those snaky locks of hair—and could it be that all this had, as it were, cloven fast to him, and was he unable to shake off, to cast aside all this?

Nonsense! nonsense! to-morrow everything will disappear and leave no trace. . . . But will she release him to-morrow?

Yes, he put all these questions to himself—and

time began to wear on toward three o'clock—and he donned his black dress-coat, and after strolling for a while in the park, he went to the Pólozoffs'.

He found in their drawing-room a secretary of legation, a German, a long, long, blond, with a horse-like profile, and his hair parted in the middle behind—(that was still in fashion at that date)—and . . . oh, wondrous to relate! whom else? von Dönhof, that same officer with whom he had fought a few days previously! He had not in the least expected to meet him in that particular place—and he involuntarily grew embarrassed, but saluted him, nevertheless.

"Are you acquainted?"—asked Márya Nikoláevna, whom Sánin's confusion did not escape.

"Yes . . . I have already had the honour,"—articulated von Dönhof—and bending slightly in the direction of Márya Nikoláevna, he added, with a smile: "This is the very man. . . . Your fellow-countryman . . . . the Russian . . . . "

"It cannot be!"—she exclaimed in an undertone, shaking her finger at him—and immediately began to dismiss both him and the long secretary, who, by all the signs, was dead in love with her—for he even opened his mouth every time he looked at her. Dönhof withdrew immediately, with amiable submissiveness, like a friend of the family, who understands at half a word

what is required of him; the secretary tried to be stubborn, but Márya Nikoláevna sent him away without any ceremony whatever.

"Go to your reigning personage," she said to him (there dwelt in Wiesbaden at that time a certain Principessa di Monaco, who bore a wonderful resemblance to a wretched woman of the half-world)—"why should you sit with such a plebeian as I am?"

"Upon my word, madame,"—the unfortunate secretary assured her,—"all the princesses in the world. . . ."

But Márya Nikoláevna was merciless—and the secretary took himself and his hair-parting off.

Márya Nikoláevna had arrayed herself very much to her "advantage"—as our grandmothers were wont to say—on that day. She wore a gown of rose-coloured glacé silk, with lace à la Fontanges, and a huge diamond in each ear. Her eyes were as brilliant as the diamonds: she seemed to be in high spirits.

She made Sánin sit beside her, and began to talk to him about Paris, whither she was preparing to go within a few days; about how the Germans bored her, that they were stupid when they were wise, and inopportunely wise when they were stupid;—and all at once, straight out—*à brûle pourpoint*—she asked him whether it were true that he had fought a duel recently, for the

sake of a lady, with that officer who had just been sitting there?

"How do you know about that?"—muttered the astounded Sánin.

"The earth is filled with the sound thereof, Dmítry Pávlovitch; but I know that you were in the right, a thousandfold in the right—and behaved like a true knight. Tell me—that lady—was your betrothed?"

Sánin contracted his brows slightly. . .

"Come, I will not, I will not do it again,"—said Márya Nikoláevna hastily. "It is disagreeable to you; forgive me, I won't do so again! do not be angry!" Pólozoff made his appearance from the adjoining room, with a sheet of newspaper in his hands.

"What do you want? Is dinner ready?"

"Dinner will be served directly, and just see what I have read in the *Northern Bee* . . . . Prince Gromobóy is dead."

Márya Nikoláevna raised her head.

"Ah! The kingdom of heaven be his! Every year," she said, turning to Sánin, "in February, on my birthday, he used to decorate all my rooms with camellias. But it is not worth while to live in Petersburg during the winter for that. He was over seventy, was n't he?"—she asked her husband.

"Yes. His funeral is described in the paper. The whole court was present. And here are Prince Kovrízhkin's verses on the event."

"Well, that's splendid."

"I'll read them aloud, if you like? The prince calls him a man of counsel."

"No, I wouldn't like. He a man of counsel indeed! He was simply the husband of Tatyána Yúrievna. Let's eat our dinner. The living man thinks of living things. Dmítry Pávlovitch, your arm."

The dinner, like that of the preceding evening, was amazing, and passed off in very lively style. Márya Nikoláevna had a talent for narration . . . . a rare gift in a woman, and still more so in a Russian woman! She did not stand on ceremony as to her expressions, and her fellow-countrymen, in particular, caught it heavily. More than once Sánin was forced to laugh heartily at some audacious and well-aimed remark. The thing which Márya Nikoláevna could endure least was hypocrisy, empty phrases and lying. . . . She found this almost everywhere. She made a display, as it were, and boasted of the lowly sphere in which her life had begun: she imparted decidedly strange anecdotes about her parents, in their youthful days; she called herself as much of a clodhopper as Natálya Kirílovna Narýshkin.[1] It became evident to Sánin, that she had gone through much more, in her day, than the great majority of her countrywomen.

[1] The mother of Peter the Great, through whose alliance with Tzar Alexéi Mikhaílovitch the Narýshkins (said to have descended from a Crimean Tatár) first came into prominence.—Translator.

But Pólozoff ate thoughtfully, drank attentively, only occasionally darting a glance, now at his wife, again at Sánin, with his whitish, apparently blind, but, in reality, extremely keen-sighted eyes.—"What a clever dear thou art!"—exclaimed Márya Nikoláevna, turning toward him: "how well thou hast executed all my commissions in Frankfurt! I'd like to give thee a kiss on thy dear little brow—but thou dost not care for that from me."

"No, I don't,"—replied Pólozoff, as he cut up an orange with a silver knife.

Márya Nikoláevna looked at him, and drummed on the table with her fingers.

"So our wager holds good?"—she said significantly.

"It does."

"All right. Thou wilt lose."

Pólozoff thrust his chin forward.—"Well, don't be too sure of thyself this time, Márya Nikoláevna, for my opinion is that thou wilt be the loser."

"What is the wager about? May I know?"—asked Sánin.

"No . . . . it is impossible at present,"—replied Márya Nikoláevna, with a laugh.

The clock struck seven. The waiter announced that the carriage was at the door. Pólozoff escorted his wife to the door, and immediately returned to his easy-chair.

"See to it that thou dost not forget the letter to the steward!"—Márya Nikoláevna called to him from the antechamber.

"I'll write it; don't worry. I'm an accurate man."

XXXIX

In the year 1840 the theatre at Wiesbaden was not only wretched as to exterior, but its troupe, in their pomposity and miserable mediocrity, their diligent and commonplace routine, did not rise by so much as a hair's-breadth above the level which, down to the present day, may be regarded as normal for all German theatres, and of which the troupe in Carlsruhe, under the "celebrated" direction of Herr Devrient, has of late presented the most perfect example. Behind the box engaged for "her Transparency Madame von Pólozoff" (the Lord only knows how the waiter had procured it—whether he had not, as an actual fact, bribed the Stadt-Director!)—behind this box was a little room with small divans set all around the walls. Before entering it, Márya Nikoláevna asked Sánin to raise the little shades which separated the box from the theatre.

"I do not wish to be seen,"—said she,—"for in that case, people will make their way hither immediately." She also placed him beside her, with his back to the auditorium, so that the box appeared to be empty.

The orchestra played the overture to the "Nozze di Figaro." . . . . The curtain rose: the play began.

It was one of the numerous home-made productions, in which well-read but talentless authors, in choice but deadly dull language, assiduously but clumsily set forth some "profound" or "palpitating" idea, presented a so-called tragic conflict, and induced a tedium . . . fairly Asiatic, like the Asiatic cholera! Márya Nikoláevna listened patiently to half of one act, but when the first lover, on learning of the treachery of his beloved (he was dressed in a cinnamon-brown frock-coat, with "puffs" and a velveteen collar, a striped waistcoat with mother-of-pearl buttons, green trousers with boot-straps of patent-leather, and white wash-leather gloves),—when that lover, resting both clenched fists on his breast, and protruding his elbows in front of him in an acute angle, began to howl exactly like a dog—Márya Nikoláevna could endure it no longer.

"The worst French actor, in the worst little provincial town, plays better and more naturally than the leading German celebrity,"—she exclaimed indignantly, and changed her seat to the rear room.—"Come here,"—she said to Sánin, tapping the divan by her side.—"Let's have a chat."

Sánin obeyed.

Márya Nikoláevna darted a glance at him.—"But you are soft as silk, I see! Your wife will have an easy time with you. That buffoon,"—she continued, pointing the tip of her fan at the howling actor (he was playing the part of a private tutor),—"has reminded me of my youth; I, also, was in love with the tutor. It was my first . . . . no, my second passion. I fell in love for the first time with a young fellow in training for a monk, at the Donskóy Monastery.[1] I was twelve years old. I saw him only on Sundays. He wore a velvet cassock, he scented himself with lavender water, as he made his way through the crowd with the censer he spoke to the ladies in French: '*Pardon, excusez,*'—and never raised his eyes, but he had eyelashes,—as long as that!"—Márya Nikoláevna marked off with her thumb-nail half of her middle finger, and showed it to Sánin.—"My tutor's name was Monsieur Gaston. I must tell you that he was a frightfully learned and very strict man, a Swiss, and with such an energetic face! He had side-whiskers as black as pitch, and a Grecian profile—and his lips looked as though they had been cast out of iron! I was afraid of him! In all my life, I have never been afraid of any man but that one! He was the governor of my brother, who died afterward . . . he was drowned. And a Gipsy has foretold a violent death for me also—but that is nonsense.

[1] A famous monastery in the outskirts of Moscow.—TRANSLATOR.

I don't believe it. Just imagine Ippolít Sídoritch with a dagger!"

"One may die otherwise than by a dagger,"—remarked Sánin.

"That's all nonsense! Are you superstitious? I'm not—not in the least. But what is to be cannot be avoided. Monsieur Gaston lived in our house, over my head. When I used to wake up in the night, I could hear his footsteps—he went to bed very late—and my heart used to swoon with emotion . . . . or with some other feeling. My father could hardly read and write himself, but he gave us a good education. Do you know, I understand Latin?"

"You? Latin?"

"Yes—I. Monsieur Gaston taught me. I read the Æneid through with him. It's a tiresome thing—but there are nice passages. Do you remember, when Dido and Æneas in the forest. . . ."

"Yes, yes, I remember,"—said Sánin hastily. He had long ago forgotten all his Latin, and had but a faint conception of the Æneid.

Márya Nikoláevna looked at him, according to her wont, somewhat askance, and from below upward.—"But you must not think that I am very learned. Akh! good heavens, no—I 'm not learned, and I have no talents. I hardly know how to write . . . . truly I don't; I cannot read aloud; I can neither play

the piano, nor draw, nor embroider—nothing! That 's what I 'm like—this is all there is to me!"

She threw her hands apart.—"I am telling you all this,"—she went on,—"in the first place, to avoid hearing those fools" (she pointed at the stage, where, at that moment, instead of the actor, an actress had taken up the howl, with her elbows, also, thrust forward),—"and, in the second place, because I am in your debt; you told me about yourself yesterday."

"You were good enough to ask me,"—remarked Sánin.

Márya Nikoláevna suddenly turned toward him.—"And you do not care to know what sort of a woman I am? But I am not surprised,"—she added, leaning back once more against the cushions of the divan.—"A man is making ready to marry, and for love into the bargain, and after a duel. . . . What time has he to think of anything else?"

Márya Nikoláevna grew pensive, and began to nibble at the handle of her fan, with her large but even teeth, as white as milk.

And it seemed to Sánin that again there began to rise up in his brain that haze, from which he had not been able to rid himself—for the second day now.

The conversation between him and Márya Nikoláevna had been carried on in an undertone,

almost in a whisper—and this excited and agitated him all the more. . . .

When was all this going to end?

Weak people never put an end to things themselves—they always wait for the end.

Some one sneezed on the stage:—the sneeze had been introduced into the play by the author, as a "comic moment," or "element"; there was no other comic element about it, as a matter of course: and the spectators took advantage of that moment and laughed.

That laugh also excited Sánin.

There were minutes when he positively did not know whether he were angry or pleased, bored or merry. Oh, if Gemma could have seen him!

"Really, it is strange,"—said Márya Nikoláevna suddenly. "A man announces to you, and in such a composed voice: 'I 'm going to marry'; but no one tells you composedly: 'I 'm going to fling myself into the water.' And yet—what is the difference? 'T is strange, really."

Vexation seized upon Sánin.—"The difference is great, Márya Nikoláevna! Some men are not in the least afraid to throw themselves into the water: they know how to swim, and, in addition to that . . . so far as the strangeness of marriages is concerned . . . . if it comes to that . . . . "

He suddenly ceased speaking, and bit his tongue.

Márya Nikoláevna smote the palm of her hand with her fan.

"Finish your sentence, Dmítry Pávlovitch, finish—I know what you meant to say. 'If it comes to that, my dear madam, Márya Nikoláevna Pólozoff,' you meant to say, 'nothing more strange than *your* marriage can be imagined . . . for I know your husband well, from childhood.' That is what you meant to say,—you who know how to swim!"

"Pray,"—Sánin began . . . .

"Is n't that the truth? Is n't that the truth?"—articulated Márya Nikoláevna pertinaciously. "Come, look me in the face, and tell me that I have not spoken the truth!"

Sánin did not know where to turn his eyes.——"Well, as you like: it is true, if you insist upon it," he said at last.

Márya Nikoláevna nodded her head.—"Exactly . . . exactly. Well—and have you asked yourself, you who know how to swim, what can be the cause of so strange a . . . . step, on the part of a woman who is not poor . . . or stupid . . . or ugly? Perhaps that does not interest you; but never mind. I will tell you the reason, not now, but as soon as the entr'acte is over. I am in a constant fret lest some one should enter . . . . "

Before Márya Nikoláevna had succeeded in uttering this last word, the outer door really did open half-way—and into the box there was thrust a red, greasily-perspiring head, still young but already toothless, with long, lank hair, a pendent nose, huge ears, like those of a bat, with gold spectacles on the curious, dull little eyes, and a pair of eyeglasses on top of the spectacles. The head looked around, espied Márya Nikoláevna, grinned abominably, nodded. . . . A sinewy neck was outstretched after it. . . .

Márya Nikoláevna shook her handkerchief at it.—"I 'm not at home! *Ich bin nicht zu Hause, Herr P. . . ! Ich bin nicht zu Hause . . . . Kshshsh, kshshsh!*"

The head was surprised, laughed in a constrained way, said, with a sort of sob, in imitation of Liszt, at whose feet it had once fawned: "*Sehr gut! sehr gut!*"—and vanished.

"What sort of a creature is that?" inquired Sánin.

"That? A Wiesbaden critic. A 'littérateur,' or *valet de place,* whichever you please to call it. He is hired by the local contractor, and therefore is bound to praise everything, to go into raptures over everything; but he is thoroughly permeated with nasty gall, which he does not dare even to discharge. I 'm afraid: he 's a horrid gossip; he 'll run straight off and tell that I 'm in the theatre. Well, I don't care."

The orchestra finished playing a waltz, the curtain rose again. . . The contortions and whimpering began again on the stage.

"Well, sir,"—began Márya Nikoláevna, sinking down on the divan once more—"as long as I have got you fast, and you are compelled to sit with me, instead of luxuriating in the proximity of your betrothed . . . don't roll your eyes, and don't get angry—I understand you, and have already promised you that I will dismiss you to complete freedom—but listen now to my confession! Would you like to know what I love most of all?"

"Freedom," suggested Sánin.

Márya Nikoláevna laid her hand on his.

"Yes, Dmítry Pávlovitch,"—she said—and her voice rang with a certain peculiar, indubitably genuine solemnity—"freedom, more than all, and before all else. And you are not to think that I have boasted of this—there is nothing laudable about it—only it is *so,* and always has been and always will be *so* for me, even to my death. I must have seen a great deal of slavery in my childhood, and have suffered much from it. Well, and Monsieur Gaston, my teacher, opened my eyes also. Now, perhaps, you will understand why I married Ippolít Sídoritch: with him I am free, perfectly free, as free as the air, as the breeze. . . . . And I knew that before the

wedding, I knew that with him I should be a free kazák!"

Márya Nikoláevna ceased speaking, and flung aside her fan.

"I will tell you still another thing; I am not averse to reflection . . . . it's cheerful, and that's what our mind was given us for; but as to the consequences of what I do myself,—I never reflect, and when anything happens, I don't pity myself—not even *so much*—it isn't worth while! I have a saying: *'Cela ne tire pas à conséquence'* —I don't know how to say that in Russian. And it is correct: for what does *'tire à conséquence?'* —I shall not be called to account *here*—on this earth; and *there*—(she pointed her finger upward)—well, there—let them arrange matters as they like. When I am judged there, it won't be I! Are you listening to me? You are not bored?"

Sánin was sitting bent forward. He raised his head.—"I am not in the least bored, Márya Nikoláevna, and I am listening to you with curiosity. Only I . . I must confess . . . . I am asking myself, why you are saying all this to me?"

Márya Nikoláevna moved along a little on the divan.—"You are asking yourself. . . . Are you so dull of apprehension? Or so modest?"

Sánin raised his head still higher.

"I am saying all this to you,"—pursued Márya

Nikoláevna, in a calm tone, which, however, did not entirely conform to the expression of her face,—"because I like you very much indeed; yes, you need not be surprised, I am not jesting; for it would be unpleasant for me if, after having met you, you should cherish a disagreeable impression of me . . . or even one that was not disagreeable—I don't mind that,—but an incorrect one. That is why I have secluded myself here with you, and am remaining alone with you, and am talking so frankly to you. . . . Yes, yes, frankly. I am not lying. And observe, Dmítry Pávlovitch, I know that you are in love with another woman, that you are making ready to marry her. . . . But do justice to my disinterestedness! And here is your opportunity to say, in your turn *'Cela ne tire pas à conséquence!'*"

She laughed, but her laughter broke off abruptly—and she remained motionless, as though her own words had startled her, and in her eyes, ordinarily so merry and audacious, there was a flash of something akin to timidity,—akin even to sadness.

"The serpent! akh, she is a serpent!" Sánin was thinking meanwhile; "but what a beautiful serpent!"

"Give me my lorgnette,"—said Márya Nikoláevna, suddenly. "I want to see whether that *jeune première* actually is so homely. Really, one might suppose that she was appointed by the

management with a moral aim in view, in order that the young men might not be too much fascinated."

Sánin handed her the lorgnette, and, as she took it from him, she clasped his hand swiftly in both her hands.

"Please don't be so serious,"—she whispered, with a smile.—"Do you know what? no one can impose any fetters on me; but then, I impose no fetters.—I love freedom, and recognise no obligations—and that not for myself alone. But now, stand aside, if you please, and let us listen to the play."

Márya Nikoláevna turned her glasses on the stage—and Sánin began to look in that direction also, as he sat by her side, in the semi-darkness of the box, and inhaled—involuntarily inhaled—the warmth and fragrance of her luxurious body, and as involuntarily turned over in his head everything which she had said to him in the course of the evening—especially in the course of the last few minutes.

XL

The play lasted for more than an hour longer, but Márya Nikoláevna and Sánin speedily ceased to look at the stage. They entered into conversation again, and that conversation slipped into the same path as before; only this time Sánin

was less taciturn. Inwardly, he was raging at himself and at Márya Nikoláevna. He endeavoured to demonstrate to her the utter groundlessness of her " theory," as though she cared for theories! He began to dispute with her, at which she secretly rejoiced. If a man argues, it means that he is yielding or will yield. He has swallowed the bait, he is surrendering, he has ceased to be wild! She retorted, laughed, assented, meditated, attacked . . . and, in the meantime, his face and her face drew nearer together, his eyes were no longer averted from her eyes. . . . Those eyes seemed to be straying, seemed to be circling over his features, and he smiled at her in response —politely, but he smiled. She had also won this much ground, that he entered into abstractions, argued about honour in mutual relations, about duty, about the sanctity of love and marriage. . . . . It is a familiar fact that these abstractions are very, very useful as a beginning . . . . as a point of departure. . . .

People who knew Márya Nikoláevna well were wont to assert that when a certain tender and modest something—a something which was almost maidenly-bashful—suddenly passed over her whole strong and vigorous being,—although you might wonder whence it proceeded, . . yet then . . . yes, then, affairs were taking a dangerous turn.

They were, obviously, taking that turn for Sá-

nin. . . . He would have felt scorn for himself, had he succeeded, even for one moment, in concentrating himself; but he did not succeed, either in concentrating or scorning himself.

And she lost no time. And it all came about because he was very far from homely. One is, involuntarily, compelled to say: "How are you to know where you will find, where you will lose?"

The play came to an end. Márya Nikoláevna asked Sánin to throw her shawl around her, and did not stir while he was wrapping the soft fabric about her really regal shoulders. Then she took his arm, emerged into the corridor—and came near shrieking aloud. At the very door of the box, like a spectre, stood Dönhof; and from behind his back peeped the repulsive figure of the Wiesbaden critic. The face of this "literary man" was fairly beaming with malicious delight.

"Do you command me to find your carriage, madame?" said the young officer, addressing Márya Nikoláevna, with the quiver of badly-concealed wrath in his voice.

"No, thank you,"—she replied. . . . "My lackey will find it. Stay here!"—she added, in an imperious whisper—and swiftly retreated, dragging Sánin along.

"Go to the devil! Why are you bothering me?" Dönhof suddenly roared at the literary

man. He was forced to vent his spleen on some one.

"*Sehr gut! sehr gut!*"—mumbled the literary man—and vanished.

Márya Nikoláevna's lackey, who was waiting for her in the vestibule, found her carriage in an instant; she hastily seated herself in it, Sánin sprang in after her. The door slammed—and Márya Nikoláevna broke into a ringing laugh.

"What are you laughing at?"—asked Sánin.

"Akh, excuse me, pray . . . . but an idea came into my head. What if Dönhof were to fight another duel with you . . . . about me. . . . . Would n't that be splendid?"

"And are you very intimately acquainted with him?"—asked Sánin.

"With him? With that little boy? He 's just one of my errand-boys. Don't worry about him!"

"Why, I 'm not worrying at all."

Márya Nikoláevna sighed.—"Akh, I know that you are not worrying. But, listen—do you know what? you are so nice, you ought not to refuse me one last request. Don't forget: two days hence I set out for Paris, and you will return to Frankfurt. . . . When shall we meet again!"

"What is your request?"

"You can ride on horseback, of course?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, see here. To-morrow morning I will take you with me—and we will ride into the suburbs together. We shall have capital horses. Then we will return, and will settle our business—and amen! Do not be surprised, do not tell me that this is a caprice, that I am crazy—all that may be true—but say merely: 'I consent!'"

Márya Nikoláevna turned her face toward him. It was dark in the carriage, but her eyes gleamed even in that gloom.

"Certainly, I consent,"—said Sánin, with a sigh.

"Akh! You sighed!"—Márya Nikoláevna mocked him. "That is what is meant by: You have said A—don't refuse to say B. But, no, no. . . . You are charming, you are good—and I will keep my promise. Here is my hand for you, ungloved, the right, the business-like hand. Take it—and trust its pressure. What sort of a woman I am, I do not know, but I am an honest man—and you can do business with me."

Sánin, without clearly accounting to himself for what he did, raised the hand to his lips. Márya Nikoláevna gently withdrew it—and suddenly ceased speaking, and maintained silence until the carriage came to a halt.

She began to alight. . . . "What 's that?" Was it merely Sánin's fancy, or did he really feel on his cheek a swift and burning touch?

"Farewell until to-morrow!"—whispered Márya Nikoláevna to him on the stairs, all illuminated with the four lights of the candelabra, which had been caught up, on her appearance, by the gilded door-porter. She kept her eyes downcast.

"Until to-morrow!"

When he reached his room, Sánin found on his table a letter from Gemma. He was frightened . . . . for a moment—but immediately rejoiced, in order the more speedily to mask his own fear to himself.—It consisted of a few lines.—She was delighted at the favourable "beginning of the affair," advised him to be patient, and added that every one in the house was well, and was rejoicing in advance over his return. Sánin thought this letter decidedly curt; but, nevertheless, he took pen and paper—and then flung all aside.—"Why write? To-morrow I shall return in person . . . . 't is time, high time!"

He immediately went to bed, and tried to get to sleep as promptly as possible. Had he remained up, and awake, he certainly would have begun to think of Gemma—but, for some reason or other . . . . he was ashamed to think of her. His conscience was stirring within him. But he soothed himself with the reflection that on the morrow everything would be over forever, and he would part forever from that giddy fine lady—and would forget all that nonsense! . . . .

Weak people, when they talk to themselves, are fond of using energetic expressions.

"Et puis .... cela ne tire pas à conséquence!"

XLI

This is what Sánin was thinking, as he got into bed. But what he thought on the following day, when Márya Nikoláevna impatiently tapped on his door with the coral handle of her riding-whip; when he beheld her on the threshold of his chamber, with the train of her dark-green riding-habit over her arm, a little masculine hat on her curls plaited in heavy braids, her veil tossed over her shoulder, and with a tempting smile on her lips, in her eyes, on her whole face—as to what he thought then history holds its peace.

"Well? Are you ready?"—her merry voice resounded.

Sánin buttoned his coat, and silently took up his hat. Márya Nikoláevna darted a brilliant glance at him, nodded her head, and ran swiftly down the staircase. And he ran after her.

The horses were already standing in the street, in front of the steps. There were three of them. A golden-bay, pure-blooded mare, with a thin, grinning muzzle, black, prominent eyes, with the legs of a deer, rather lean, but handsome and mettlesome as fire,—for Márya Nikoláevna; a powerful, broad, rather heavily-built horse, black,

without marks,—for Sánin; the third horse was destined for the groom. Márya Nikoláevna leaped agilely on her mare. . . The latter pranced and curveted, flirted out its tail, and elevated its crupper, but Márya Nikoláevna (a capital horsewoman!) held it in place. She must say good-bye to Pólozoff, who, in his inevitable fez and with dressing-gown flying open, made his appearance on the balcony, and thence waved a batiste handkerchief, without the trace of a smile, however, but frowning rather. Sánin mounted also on his horse. Márya Nikoláevna saluted Mr. Pólozoff with her whip, then lashed the flat arched neck of her steed with it; the latter reared on its hind legs, darted forward, and proceeded in a prancing, curveting gait, quivering in every nerve, champing at the bit, biting the air, and snorting violently. Sánin rode behind, and gazed at Márya Nikoláevna. Confidently, dexterously, and gracefully swayed her lithe, slender form, closely and easily confined by her corset. She turned back her head, and summoned him with her eyes. He rode up alongside of her.

"Well, here you see how nice it is,"—said she. "I am talking to you for the last time before our parting! You are a dear! and you shall not repent!"

Having uttered these last words, she moved her head from above downward several times,

as though desirous of confirming them, and making him feel their significance.

She seemed happy to such a degree that Sánin was simply amazed. A certain sedate expression made its appearance on her face—the sort of expression which children wear when they are very . . . . very much pleased.

They rode at a foot-pace to the barrier, which was not far distant, and there set out at a rapid gallop along the highway. The weather was glorious, real summer weather; the breeze blew in their faces, and hummed and whistled agreeably in their ears. They felt well; the consciousness of young, healthy life, of free, rapid movement ahead, took possession of both of them; it augmented with every moment.

Márya Nikoláevna reined in her horse, and rode at a walk; Sánin followed her example.

"There,"—she began, with a deep, blissful sigh; "there, life is worth living for this alone. When one has succeeded in accomplishing what he wishes, what seemed impossible—well, then, soul, profit by it to the utmost!" She passed her hand across her throat.—"And how amiable a person feels then! Here am I now . . how amiable I am! It seems as though I could embrace the whole world."—She pointed with her whip at a poorly-clad old man, who was making his way along on one side.—"I 'm even ready to make him happy. Here, there, you, take this,"—she cried loudly, in German—flinging her purse

at his feet. The ponderous bag (there was no such thing as a pocket-book in those days) clattered on the road. The passer-by was astonished, and halted, but Márya Nikoláevna burst out laughing, and set her horse to galloping.

"Does it make you so merry to ride on horseback?" asked Sánin, as he overtook her.

Again Márya Nikoláevna reined in her horse until it rested on its hind quarters. She never stopped it in any other way.—"I only wished to escape gratitude. He who thanks me spoils my happiness. I did n't do it for his sake, you see, but for my own. And how could he dare to thank me? I did not hear exactly what you asked me?"

"I asked . . . I wanted to know why you are so merry to-day?"

"Do you know what,"—said Márya Nikoláevna: she either did not hear what Sánin said, or else she did not consider it necessary to answer his question.—"I 'm frightfully tired of that groom, who is sticking up there behind us, and who must be thinking only about when 'the masters' will go home. How shall we get rid of him?"—She hastily drew from her pocket a little note-book.—"Shall I send him to town with a letter? No . . . . that won't do. Ah, I have it! What 's that ahead of us? A restaurant?"

Sánin looked in the direction she indicated.—"Yes, it is a restaurant, apparently."

"Well, very good, indeed. I will order him to

remain at that restaurant, and drink beer, until we return."

"But what will he think?"

"What business is that of ours? But he will not think; he will drink beer—that 's all. Come, Sánin" (she addressed him by his surname for the first time)—"advance—at a trot!"

On coming opposite the restaurant, Márya Nikoláevna called up the groom, and informed him of what she required of him. The groom, a man of English extraction and English temperament, silently lifted his hand to the visor of his cap, sprang from his horse, and took it by the bridle.

"Well, now we are free as birds!"—exclaimed Márya Nikoláevna.—"Where shall we go?—north, south, east, or west? See,—I do like the King of Hungary at his coronation" (she pointed with her whip at all four quarters of the globe).—"All is ours! No, do you know what: see, what glorious mountains there are yonder—and what a forest! Let us ride thither, to the hills, to the hills!

In die Berge, wo die Freiheit thront!"

She turned out of the highway, and galloped along a narrow, unbeaten road, which appeared to lead directly to the mountains. Sánin galloped after her.

XLII

This road soon became a path, and at last disappeared entirely, intercepted by a ditch. Sánin advised return, but Márya Nikoláevna said: "No! I want to go to the mountains! Let us ride straight as the birds fly . . ."—and made her horse leap the ditch. Sánin also leaped it. Beyond the ditch began a meadow, at first dry, then wet, then, at last, a regular marsh; the water was seeping through everywhere, and stood in pools. Márya Nikoláevna sent her horse deliberately across the pools, laughed loudly, and kept reiterating: "Let 's frolic like school-children!"

"Do you know,"—she asked Sánin,—"the meaning of the expression: 'puddle-hunting'?"[1]

"I do," replied Sánin.

"My uncle was a huntsman,"—she went on. "I used to ride with him in the spring. It was splendid! Just like you and I now—ah, the puddles! I see you are a Russian man, but you want to marry an Italian. Well, that 's your affliction. What 's that? Another ditch? Hop!"

The horse leaped—but Márya Nikoláevna's hat fell from her head, and her curls showered down over her shoulders. Sánin was on the point of slipping off his horse, and picking up the hat; but she shouted at him: "Don't touch it; I 'll get

[1] The first spring thaw.—Translator.

it myself!" bent low in her saddle, hooked the handle of her whip into the veil, and, in fact, did get the hat, and put it on her head, but without gathering up her hair, dashed headlong onward once more, and even whooped. Sánin dashed along by her side, leaped over gullies, fences, brooks, tumbling in and scrambling out, racing down hill, racing up hill, and gazing ever in her face. What a face! It seemed to be all open; the eyes were open, greedy, bright, wild; the lips, the nostrils were open also, and breathed eagerly; she stared straight and intently in front of her, and, apparently, that soul wanted to take possession of everything she beheld, the earth, the sky, the sun, and the very air itself, and grieved over one thing only: there were too few dangers —it would have overcome them all! "Sánin!" —she cried, "this is in Bürger's 'Lenore!' Only, you are not dead—are you? You are not dead? . . . I 'm alive!" Her power of daring had begun to come into action. She was no longer a woman-rider, setting her horse at a gallop—she was a young female centaur—half-beast, half-goddess—who was galloping there—and the sedate and well-trained country, trampled upon by her stormy debauch, stood amazed.

Márya Nikoláevna at last drew up her foaming, bespattered horse; it was staggering beneath her, and Sánin's powerful but heavy stallion was out of breath.

"Well? Is it pleasant?" asked Márya Nikoláevna, in a wonderful sort of whisper.

"Yes!"—responded Sánin, enthusiastically. And his blood blazed up within him.

"Wait, there's more to come!"—She stretched out her hand. The glove on it was rent.

"I told you that I would lead you to the forest, to the mountains . . . there they are, the mountains!"—In fact, the mountains, covered with lofty forest, began a couple of hundred paces from the spot to which the wild riders had flown. —"Look, yonder is the road, too. Let us set out—and forward! But at a walk. We must give the horses a rest."

They rode on. With one powerful sweep of the hand, Márya Nikoláevna tossed back her hair. Then she looked at her gloves—and took them off. "My hands will smell of the leather,"—she said, "but you don't mind that, I hope? Do you?" . . . . Márya Nikoláevna smiled, and Sánin smiled also. That mad ride of theirs seemed to have definitively brought them close together, and made them friends.

"How old are you?"—she suddenly inquired.

"Twenty-two."

"Is it possible? I am also twenty-two. It is a good age. Add our ages together, and even then the sum will be far removed from old age. But how hot it is! Is my face red?"

"As a poppy."

Márya Nikoláevna wiped her face with her handkerchief.—"If we can but reach the forest, it will be cool there. Such an old forest is just like an old friend. Have you friends?"

Sánin reflected a little.—"Yes . . . only, not many. No real ones."

"But I have some, real friends, only not old ones. Here 's a friend, also—a horse. How carefully it carries one! Akh, it is capital here! Is it possible that I shall set out for Paris the day after to-morrow?"

"Yes . . . is it possible?"—chimed in Sánin.

"And are you going to Frankfurt?"

"It is imperatively necessary that I should go to Frankfurt."

"Well, never mind . . . . good luck to you! But to-day is ours . . . . ours . . . . ours!"

The horses reached the border of the forest, and entered it. The shadow of the forest enveloped them broadly and softly on all sides.

"Oh, yes, this is paradise!"—exclaimed Márya Nikoláevna. "Deeper, further into the shade, Sánin!"

The horses moved on, "deeper into the shade," reeling slightly, and snorting. The path wherein they trod suddenly made a turn to one side, and plunged into a rather narrow gorge. The scent of the young birch-trees, of ferns, of pine-resin, of rank rotting foliage from the preceding year,

seemed to be shut up within it—dense and dreamy. From the crevices of the huge, dark-brown rocks emanated a robust coolness. On both sides of the path rose round mounds overgrown with green moss.

"Stop!"—cried Márya Nikoláevna. "I want to sit down and rest on this velvet. Help me to dismount."

Sánin leaped from his horse, and ran to her. She leaned on his shoulders, sprang instantly to the ground, and seated herself on one of the mossy mounds. He stood in front of her, holding the bridles of both horses in his hands.

She raised her eyes to his. . . . "Sánin, can you forget?"

Sánin recalled what had happened the night before . . . . in the carriage:—"What is that—a question . . . . or a reproach?"

"I have never reproached any one for anything in my life. But do you believe in love-charms?"

"What?"

"In love-charms—you know; what is referred to in our songs. In the popular Russian ballads."

"Ah! That 's what you are talking about . . ." drawled Sánin.

"Yes, about that. I believe in that . . . . and do you?"

"Love-charms . . . . witchcraft . . . ." repeated

Sánin. "Everything is possible in this world. I did not use to believe in it—now I do. I don't recognise myself."

Márya Nikoláevna pondered, and glanced about her.—"It strikes me that I know this spot. Look behind that spreading oak, Sánin, and see whether a red wooden cross stands there, or not."

Sánin stepped a few paces to one side.—"Yes, it is there."

Márya Nikoláevna smiled.—"Ah, good! I know where we are. We are not lost yet. What is that tapping? A wood-cutter?"

Sánin peered into the thicket.—"Yes . . . . Yonder is some man chopping dry branches."

"I must put my hair in order,"—said Márya Nikoláevna.—"If I don't, and am seen, I shall be censured." She took off her hat, and began to plait her long tresses. Sánin stood in front of her. . . . Her graceful limbs were clearly defined under the dark folds of cloth, to which, here and there, filaments of moss adhered.

One of the horses suddenly shook itself behind Sánin; he himself involuntarily trembled from head to foot. Everything in him was in utter confusion—his nerves were tense as guitar-strings. Truly had he said that he did not know himself. . . . He really was bewitched. His whole being was full of one . . . . one thought, one desire. Márya Nikoláevna darted a piercing glance at him. "Now, then, everything is as it

should be,"—she said, putting on her hat. "Won't you sit down? Yonder! No; wait .... don't sit down. What 's that?"

Through the crests of the trees, through the air of the forest, rolled a dull vibration.

"Can that be thunder?"

"Apparently, it is thunder,"—replied Sánin.

"Akh, yes, this is a feast-day! simply a feast-day! That was the only thing that was lacking!"—A dull roar resounded once again, rose—and fell in a peal.—"*Bravo! Bis!* Do you remember I was telling you last night about the Æneid? The thunder caught *them* in the forest also, you know. But we must go."—She rose hastily to her feet.—"Lead up my horse. ... Hold out your hand. That 's it. I am not heavy."

She soared into her saddle like a bird. Sánin also mounted his horse.

"Are you going home?"—he asked, in an unsteady voice.

"Yes—home!!" she replied, slowly, gathering up her reins.—"Follow me,"—she commanded, almost roughly.

She rode out upon the road, and passing the red cross, descended into a hollow, reached the cross-roads, turned to the right, and began again to ascend.... She evidently knew whither the road led—and the road led deeper, ever deeper, into the fastnesses of the forest. She said nothing,

and did not look behind her; she moved on imperiously in advance—and he followed her obediently and meekly, without a shadow of will in his sinking heart. A fine rain began to drizzle down. She hastened the gait of her horse, and he kept up with her. At last, athwart the dark verdure of the fir-shrubs, from beneath a projection of a grey cliff, there peeped out at him a wretched watchman's hut, with a low-browed door in the wattled wall. . . . Márya Nikoláevna made her horse force its way through the bushes, sprang off—and, finding herself suddenly at the entrance of the hut, she turned to Sánin—and whispered: "Æneas!"

Four hours later, Márya Nikoláevna and Sánin, accompanied by the groom, who was dozing in his saddle, returned to Wiesbaden, to the hotel. Mr. Pólozoff met his wife, holding in his hands the letter to the steward. But after having scrutinised her more attentively, he expressed on his countenance a certain dissatisfaction—and even muttered:—"Can it be that I have lost my wager?"

Márya Nikoláevna merely shrugged her shoulders.

And on that same day, two hours later, Sánin stood before her, in his own room, like a distracted, a ruined man. . . .

"Whither art thou going?"—she asked him. "To Paris, or to Frankfurt?"

"I am going where thou wilt be—and I shall be with thee, until thou drivest me away,"—he replied, with despair, and fell to kissing the hands of his sovereign. She released them, laid them on his head—and grasped his hair with all ten fingers. She slowly drew her fingers through and twisted that unresisting hair, and drew herself up to her full height: triumph curled serpent-like about her lips, and her eyes, wide, and bright to whiteness, expressed only the pitiless stolidity and satiety of victory. The hawk which is clawing a captured bird has such eyes.

XLIII

That was what Dmítry Sánin recalled, when, in the silence of his study, as he rummaged among his old papers, he found with them the little garnet cross. The events which we have narrated rose clearly and in their proper order before his mental vision. . . . But on arriving at the minute when he turned with such a humiliating entreaty to Madame Pólozoff, when he threw himself in self-surrender beneath her feet, when his servitude began,—he turned away from the images which he had evoked, he did not wish to recall anything further. Not that his memory had played him false—oh, no! he knew,

he knew but too well, what had followed that minute, but shame stifled him; even now, so many years afterward, he was frightened by the feeling of invincible scorn for himself, which would, inevitably,—of that he could have no doubt—surge in upon him and drown, like a flood, all other sensations, the moment he should cease to bid his memory to hold its peace. But turn away as he would from the rising memories, he could not wholly stifle them. He remembered the abominable, tearful, lying, pitiful letter which he had despatched to Gemma, and which had remained unanswered. . . . Present himself before her, return to her, after such a deception, after such treachery—no! no! he had enough conscience and honour left in him for that. Moreover, he had lost all confidence in himself, all respect for himself; he dared not vouch for anything. Sánin also recalled how, later on, he—oh, disgrace!—had sent Pólozoff's lackey for his things in Frankfurt, how cowardly he had been, how he had thought only of one thing: to go away to Paris as promptly as possible—to Paris; how, at the bidding of Márya Nikoláevna, he had fawned on and humoured Ippolít Sídoritch—and had been amiable to Dönhof, on whose finger he noticed precisely the same sort of iron ring which Márya Nikoláevna had given to him! ! ! Then the memories became still worse, still more shameful. . . . A waiter hands him a visiting-card,

and on it stands the name of Pantaleone Cippatola, Court Singer to his Royal Highness the Duke of Modena! He hides from the old man, but cannot avoid encountering him in the corridor—and there rises up before him the incensed face, beneath the upward-curling grey crest; the aged eyes flame like coals of fire—and menacing exclamations and curses: "*Maledizione!*" and even terrible words become audible: "*Codardo! Infame traditore!*"—Sánin screws up his eyes, shakes his head, turns away again and again—and nevertheless, he beholds himself sitting in the travelling-carriage, on the narrow front seat. . . . . On the back seats, the comfortable seats, sit Márya Nikoláevna and Ippolít Sídoritch—four horses are proceeding at a brisk trot over the pavements of Wiesbaden—to Paris! to Paris! Ippolít Sídoritch is eating a pear, which he, Sánin, has peeled, and Márya Nikoláevna is looking at him—and laughing with that sneering laugh which is already familiar to him, the enslaved man,—the sneering laugh of a sovereign owner. . . .

But, oh, my God! yonder, at the corner of the street, not far from the egress from the town, is not that Pantaleone standing there again—and who is it with him? Can it be Emilio? Yes, 't is he, that enthusiastic, devoted lad! Not long ago his youthful heart was worshipping before its hero, its ideal—but now, his pale, handsome face

—so handsome that Márya Nikoláevna observed it, and even thrust her head out of the carriage-window—his noble face is blazing with wrath and scorn; his eyes—how like *those* eyes!—are eagerly riveted upon Sánin, and his lips are compressed . . . and suddenly open, to emit insult . . . .

And Pantaleone stretches forth his hand, and points out Sánin—to whom? to Tartaglia, who is standing by, and Tartaglia barks at Sánin—and the very bark of the honest dog rings out like an intolerable affront. . . . 'T is monstrous!

And then—that sojourn in Paris—and all the humiliations, all the loathsome tortures of the slave, who is not permitted to be jealous, or to complain, and who is finally discarded, like a worn-out garment. . . .

Then—the return to his native land, the poisoned, devastated life, the petty bustle, the petty cares, repentance bitter and fruitless—and forgetfulness equally bitter and fruitless—a punishment not evident, but incessant and of every moment, like an insignificant but incurable pain, paying off, kopék by kopék, a debt which cannot be calculated. . . .

The cup is filled to overflowing—enough!

How had the little cross, given to Sánin by Gemma, escaped, why had not he sent it back, how had it happened that, until that day, he had never even once come across it? Long, long did

he sit immersed in thought—and already taught by experience, in the course of all those years, he still was not able to comprehend how he could have abandoned Gemma, whom he so tenderly and passionately loved, for a woman whom he did not love at all! . . . On the following day, he astonished all his friends and acquaintances: he announced to them that he was going abroad.

The surprise extended to society. Sánin quit Petersburg in the heart of winter, after having just hired and furnished a capital apartment, and even subscribed to the performances of the Italian opera, in which Madame Patti herself—Madame Patti herself, herself, herself!—was taking part! His friends and acquaintances were puzzled. But people, in general, do not occupy themselves for long with other people's affairs, and when Sánin set out for foreign parts, no one but his French tailor went to the railway station to see him off—and that in the hope of receiving payment for his little account—"*pour un saute-en-barque en velours noir, tout à fait chic.*"

XLIV

Sánin had told his friends that he was going abroad—but he had not told them precisely where. The reader will easily divine that he journeyed straight to Frankfurt. Thanks to the universal diffusion of railways, he was in Frank-

furt on the fourth day after his departure from Petersburg. He had not visited it since the year 1840. The "White Swan" inn stood on its former site, although it was no longer regarded as first-class. The Zeil, the principal thoroughfare of Frankfurt, had undergone little alteration, but not only was there no trace of Signora Roselli's house—the very street in which her confectionery shop had stood had disappeared. Sánin roamed like a half-witted person about the localities which he had once known so well—and recognised nothing; the former buildings had vanished; they had been superseded by new streets, lined with huge, close-set houses, with elegant villas; even the public park, where his last explanation with Gemma had taken place, had grown up and changed to such an extent that Sánin asked himself—is it really the same park? What was there for him to do? How and where was he to make inquiries? Thirty years had passed since then. . . It was no easy affair! No matter to whom he applied—no one had even heard the name of Roselli. The landlord of the inn counselled him to make inquiries at the public library; there he would find all the old newspapers, but what advantage he would derive therefrom the landlord himself could not explain. Sánin, in despair, inquired about Herr Klüber. That name was well known to the landlord,—but here, also, he was unsuccessful. The

elegant clerk, after having made considerable noise in the world, and risen to the vocation of a capitalist, had failed in business, become bankrupt, and died in jail. . . . This news did not, however, cause Sánin the slightest pain. He had already begun to regard his trip as rather foolish . . . . but, lo, one day, as he was turning over the Frankfurt directory, he came upon the name of von Dönhof, retired major (Major a. D.). He immediately summoned a carriage, and drove to him—although why should *this* von Dönhof, infallibly, be *that* von Dönhof, and why even should *that* von Dönhof be able to impart to him any news about the Roselli family? Never mind; a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Sánin found the retired Major von Dönhof at home—and in the grizzled gentleman who received him, he immediately recognised his former antagonist. And the latter recognised him, and even rejoiced at his appearance. It reminded him of his youth—and his youthful pranks. Sánin heard from him that the Roselli family had, long since, emigrated to America, to New York; that Gemma had married a merchant; that he, Dönhof, moreover, had an acquaintance, who was also a merchant, who probably knew the husband's address, as he had large dealings with America. Sánin asked Dönhof to go to that acquaintance—and—oh, joy!—Dönhof brought him the address of Gemma's husband, Mr. Jere-

miah Slocum, No. 501 Broadway, New York.—Only, the address was of the year 1863.

"Let us hope,"—exclaimed Dönhof,—"that our former Frankfurt beauty is still alive, and has not left New York! By the way,"—he added, lowering his voice, "and how about that Russian lady who was then staying in Wiesbaden, you remember—Madame von Bo . . . . von Bolozóff—is she still alive?"

"No,"—replied Sánin,—"she died long ago."

Dönhof raised his eyes—but, perceiving that Sánin had turned away, and was frowning,—he did not add another word—and withdrew.

That very day Sánin despatched a letter to Mrs. Gemma Slocum, in New York. In the letter, he told her that he was writing from Frankfurt, whither he had come, solely with the object of looking her up; that he was fully conscious to what a degree he was destitute of every right to a reply from her; that he in no way deserved her forgiveness—and only hoped that she, amid the happy environment in which she found herself, had long since forgotten his very existence. He added that he had decided to recall himself to her memory, in consequence of an accidental occurrence, which had aroused too vividly in him the images of the past; he told her the story of his life, solitary, without family, joyless; he adjured her to understand the causes

which had impelled him to address himself to her, not to allow him to carry with him into the grave the painful consciousness of his fault—long since atoned for by suffering, but not forgiven—and to make him glad if only with the briefest information as to what her life was like in that New World, whither she had removed. "By writing me even a single word,"—thus did Sánin wind up his letter,—"you will be doing a good deed, worthy of your beautiful soul,—and I shall thank you until my last breath. I am stopping here at the *White Swan* inn" (he underlined these words) "and shall wait,—wait until spring for your reply."

He sent off this letter,—and settled down to wait. Six whole weeks did he live in the inn, hardly going outside of his room, and seeing absolutely no one. No one could write to him from Russia, or from anywhere else; and that was to his taste; if a letter were to come addressed to him, he would know at once that it was *it*—the one for which he was waiting. He read from morning until night—and not newspapers, but serious books, historical works. This prolonged course of reading, this mute stillness, this snail-like, hidden existence—were all exactly suited to his spiritual mood; and for this alone, thanks to Gemma! But was she alive? Would she answer?

At last a letter arrived—bearing an American stamp—from New York, addressed to him. The

handwriting of the address on the envelope was English. . . . He did not recognise it, and his heart contracted. He could not at once make up his mind to break open the packet. He glanced at the signature: "Gemma!" The tears gushed from his eyes. The mere fact that she had signed with her name, omitting her surname, served him as a pledge of reconciliation, of pardon! He spread out the thin sheet of notepaper—a photograph slipped from it. He hastily picked it up—and was fairly dumfounded: Gemma, the living Gemma, as young as he had known her thirty years ago! The selfsame eyes, the selfsame lips, the same type of the whole face! On the back of the photograph was written: "My daughter Marianna." The whole letter was very simple and affectionate. Gemma thanked Sánin for not having hesitated to address her, for having had faith in her. She did not conceal from him, either, the fact that she really had lived through painful moments after his flight, but she immediately added that, nevertheless, she regarded—and always had regarded—her meeting with him as a happiness—since that meeting had prevented her becoming the wife of Herr Klüber—and so, although indirectly, it had been the cause of her marriage to her present husband, with whom she was now living for the eight-and-twentieth year, in complete felicity, in comfort and luxury. Their house was known

to all New York. Gemma informed Sánin that she had five children—four sons and one daughter, a girl of eighteen, engaged to be married, whose photograph she sent him—as she, according to universal opinion, greatly resembled her mother. Gemma kept her sad news for the end of her letter. Frau Lenore had died in New York, whither she had followed her daughter and son-in-law—but had been able to rejoice in their happiness, and dandle her grandchildren on her knee. Pantaleone had also prepared to go to America, but had died just before he was to have left Frankfurt. "And Emilio—our dear, incomparable Emilio—died a glorious death for the freedom of his native land, in Sicily, whither he went among that 'Thousand' who were led by the great Garibaldi; we all fervently lamented the death of our inestimable brother; but even as we wept, we were proud of him—and shall always be proud of him and hold his memory sacred! His lofty, unselfish soul was worthy of the martyr's crown!" Then Gemma expressed her regret that Sánin's life had—apparently—fallen into such unpleasant places, wished him first of all solace and spiritual tranquillity, and said that she should be glad to see him again—although she was aware that such a meeting was hardly probable. . . .

We will not undertake to depict the sensations experienced by Sánin, on perusing this letter.

There is no satisfactory expression for such feelings: they are deeper and more sacred—and more indefinite—than any word. Music alone would be competent to transmit them.

Sánin replied immediately—and sent as a gift to the bride—"To Marianna Slocum, from an unknown friend"—the garnet cross, mounted on a magnificent pearl necklace. This gift, although very valuable, did not ruin him. In the course of the thirty years which had elapsed since his first sojourn in Frankfurt, he had succeeded in acquiring a considerable fortune. Early in May he returned to Petersburg—but probably not for long. It is rumoured that he is selling off all his property—and making ready to go to America.

KNOCK . . . KNOCK . . . KNOCK

A STUDY

(1870)

KNOCK . . . KNOCK . . . KNOCK . . .

A STUDY

I

WE all seated ourselves in a circle, and our good friend Alexander Vasílievitch Riedel (he had a German surname, but he was a born and bred Russian) began as follows:

I will relate to you, gentlemen, an incident which happened to me in the thirties . . . . forty years ago, as you see. I will be brief—and you must not interrupt me.

I was living in Petersburg at the time, and had only just come out of the university. My brother was serving in the horse-guard artillery, with the rank of ensign. His battery was stationed at Krásnoe Seló,[1]—it was in summer. My brother was not quartered in Krásnoe Seló proper, but in one of the adjacent hamlets. I was his guest more than once, and had become well acquainted with all his comrades. He was lodged in a fairly-clean cottage together with another officer be-

[1] Literally, "Red Village," situated sixteen miles from St. Petersburg. A summer resort, but chiefly known as the site of the great summer camp and manœuvring-ground.—TRANSLATOR.

longing to his battery. This officer's name was Tyégleff, Ilyá Stepánitch. I became particularly intimate with him.

Márlinsky has become old-fashioned now; no one reads him, and people even ridicule him; but in the thirties he made more noise than any one else, and Púshkin—according to the ideas of the youth of that period—could not be compared with him. He not only enjoyed the glory of being the leading Russian writer, he even effected what is far more difficult, and more rarely encountered—he imprinted his stamp upon the generation contemporaneous with him. Heroes *à la Márlinsky* were cropping up in every direction, and especially among army and artillery officers; they conversed and corresponded in his language; in society they maintained a gloomy, reticent mien, with " a storm in the soul, and a flame in the blood," like Lieutenant Byelozór of " The Frigate Hope." Female hearts were " devoured " by them. The epithet " fatal " was then invented for them. This type, as every one knows, persisted for a long time, until the date of Petchórin.[1] What all did not that type contain? Byronism and romanticism; reminiscences of the French Revolution and the Decembrists[2]—and

[1] The hero of Lérmontoff's famous novel "A Hero of Our Times." —Translator.

[2] The conspirators who made trouble on the accession to the throne of the Emperor Nicholas I, in December, 1825. The Grand Duke Constantine should have succeeded his brother Alexander I; but he renounced the succession in order to marry a Polish woman.

adoration of Napoleon. Faith in Fate, in one's star, in the force of character, of pose, and of phrase—and the anguish of futility; the disquieting agitations of petty self-love—and actual force and daring; noble aspirations, and bad bringing-up, and ignorance; aristocratic manners —and a flaunting of toys. . . But enough of philosophising! . . . I have promised to narrate.

II

Sub-lieutenant Tyégleff belonged precisely to that category of "fatal" men, although he did not possess the exterior attributed to those persons: for example, he bore not the slightest resemblance to Lérmontoff's "fatalist." He was a man of medium height, of decidedly thick-set build, with high cheek-bones, and fair-haired, almost tow-headed; he had a round, fresh, red-cheeked face, a snub-nose, a low forehead overgrown with hair on the temples, and large, regular lips which were eternally motionless; he never laughed or even smiled. Only from time to time, when he was fatigued and heaved a sigh, did his square teeth, white as sugar, become visible. The same artificial impassivity was spread over all his features. Had it not been for that they would

No one knew of this renunciation except the Dowager Empress, Alexander I, and Constantine. Revolutionists took advantage of the muddle arising from Nicholas's ignorance of his rights, and so forth.—Translator.

have revealed themselves as good-natured. The only thing about his whole face that was not perfectly ordinary was his eyes, which were not large, and had greenish pupils and yellow eyelashes. The right eye was a trifle higher up than the left, which imparted to his gaze a certain diversity, strangeness, and drowsiness. Tyégleff's physiognomy was not devoid, however, of a certain agreeability, and almost always expressed satisfaction with a dash of perplexity, just as though he were internally pursuing some cheerless thought which he could not possibly catch. Notwithstanding all this, he did not produce the impression of an arrogant person: one would have taken him for a wounded rather than a haughty man. He talked very little, falteringly, in a hoarse voice, and with unnecessary repetitions of words. Contrary to the majority of fatalists, he did not employ peculiarly-whimsical expressions, and resorted to them only in writing: he had a thoroughly childish chirography.

The authorities regarded him as a " so-so " officer,—not over-capable and not sufficiently zealous. " He is punctual but not methodical," was what was said of him by the general in command of the brigade—who was of German extraction.[1]

[1] The point is, that he used mongrel Russian—foreign words slightly Russified in form: " punktualnost," and " accuratnost."—TRANSLATOR.

And for the soldiers, also, Tyégleff was "so-so" —neither fish nor meat. He lived modestly, in accordance with his means. He had been left a full orphan at the age of nine years: his father and mother had been drowned in the spring, in a freshet, as they were crossing the Oká on a ferry-boat. He had received his education in a private boarding-school, where he was considered one of the very stupidest and most peaceable pupils. He had entered the horse-guard artillery at his own importunate desire, and on the recommendation of his great-uncle, an influential man, as yúnker, and had passed the examinations—though with difficulty—first for ensign and then for sub-lieutenant. His relations with the other officers were strained. They did not like him and visited him rarely, and he went to hardly any one. The presence of strangers embarrassed him; he immediately became unnatural, awkward . . . . there was no comradeship in him, and he called no one "thou," and was called "thou" by no one. But he was respected; and men respected him not for his character or his brains and culture, but because they recognised in him that special seal wherewith "fatal" people are stamped. "Tyégleff will have a career; Tyégleff will distinguish himself"—not one of his comrades expected that;—but "Tyégleff will cut up some remarkable caper," or "Tyégleff will take and suddenly turn out a

Napoleon"—was not regarded as improbable. For there the "star" came into play, and he was a man "with a predestination"—as there are people "with a sigh" and "with a tear."

III

Two incidents which marked the very beginning of his service as an officer aided greatly in firmly establishing his reputation as a man of fate. Namely: on the very first day after he was promoted—about the middle of March—he was walking along the quay in full uniform, in company with other officers who had just been released from examination. That year spring had come early, the Nevá had broken up; huge floes of ice had already passed down, but the whole river was dammed with fine, dense ice soaked with water. The young men were chatting and laughing . . . when suddenly one of them stopped short; he had descried on the slowly-moving surface of the river, about twenty paces from the shore, a tiny dog. Having clambered upon a projecting block of ice, it was trembling all over and whining. "Why, it will surely perish,"—said the officer through his teeth. The dog was being carried slowly past one of the descents constructed along the quay. Suddenly Tyégleff, without saying a word, ran down that descent, and leaping along over the thin ice, tumbling

and skipping, he reached the dog, seized it by its neck, and, having regained the shore in safety, flung it on the pavement. The danger to which Tyégleff had exposed himself was so great, his deed had been so unexpected, that his comrades were fairly petrified with astonishment, and only when he called a drozhky, in order to drive home, did they begin to speak all together. His whole uniform was wet. In reply to their exclamations, Tyégleff remarked indifferently that a man cannot avoid what is written in his fate—and ordered the cabman to drive on.

"But take the dog with thee as a memento," —shouted one of the officers after him. But Tyégleff merely waved his hand, and his comrades exchanged glances of dumb amazement.

The other incident occurred a few days later, at a card-party given by the commander of the battery. Tyégleff was sitting in a corner, and was not taking part in the game. "Ekh, if only my grandmother had told me in advance which cards were destined to win, as in Púshkin's 'Queen of Spades'!"—exclaimed one of the ensigns, who had dropped his third thousand. Tyégleff silently stepped up to the table, took up the pack of cards, cut, and saying: "The six of diamonds!"—turned up the pack. On the bottom was the six of diamonds.—"The ace of clubs!" —he proclaimed, and cut again. On the bottom was the ace of clubs.—"The king of diamonds!"

—he spoke for the third time, in an energetic whisper, through his set teeth. He had guessed right for the third time . . . . and suddenly flushed crimson all over. Probably he himself had not expected it.

"A capital trick! Show us another,"—remarked the battery commander.

"I do not deal in tricks," replied Tyégleff, drily, and went out into the adjoining room. How it came about that he managed to guess the card in advance, I will not undertake to explain, but I saw it with my own eyes. After him many of the players present tried to do the same thing, and no one succeeded. A man could guess *one* card, but two cards in succession—not by any means; while Tyégleff had guessed three! This affair still further confirmed his reputation as a mysterious man of fate. The thought frequently occurred to me afterward that if his trick with cards had not proved successful, who knows what turn his reputation would have taken, and how would he have looked upon himself? But that unexpected success definitively settled the matter.

IV

Naturally, Tyégleff immediately clutched hold of that reputation. It conferred upon him special importance, special colouring. . . "*Cela*

le posait,"—as the French say,—and with his limited mind, insignificant attainments, and vast conceit, such a reputation was exactly to his taste. To acquire it was difficult, but it cost nothing to maintain it: all he had to do was to hold his tongue and look ferocious.

But it was not in consequence of this reputation that I became intimate with Tyégleff and, I may say, conceived an affection for him. I loved him, in the first place, because he was a well-bred eccentric, and I saw in him a kindred soul; and, in the second place, because he was a kind man and, in reality, very simple-hearted. He inspired me with something in the nature of compassion; it seemed to me that, setting aside his fancied fatalism, a tragic fate really was impending over him which he himself did not suspect. As a matter of course, I did not mention *that* feeling to him. Can there be anything more insulting to a " man of destiny " than compassion? And Tyégleff felt a liking for me: he was at his ease with me, he conversed with me,—in my presence he used to make up his mind to abandon that strange pedestal upon which he had accidentally half fallen, half clambered. Although torturingly, painfully conceited, it may be he admitted, in the bottom of his soul, that his conceit was in no way justifiable, and that others were, in all probability, looking down upon him . . . . while I, a lad of nineteen, did not embarrass him. The

fear of saying something stupid or inappropriate did not contract his ever-watchful heart in my presence. He even fell into loquacity at times; and lucky it was for him that no one except myself heard his speeches! His reputation would not have lasted long. He not only knew very little,—he hardly read anything, and confined himself to picking up appropriate anecdotes and stories. He believed in forebodings, predictions, signs, meetings; in lucky and unlucky days, in the persecution or benignity of fate,—in the significance of life, in one word. He even believed in certain "climacteric years" which some one had mentioned in his presence, and the meaning whereof he did not thoroughly understand. Genuine men of destiny should not express such beliefs: they must inspire other people with them. . . . But I alone knew Tyégleff from *that* side.

V

One day—it was on St. Ilyá's day, July 20,[1] I remember—I went to visit my brother and did not find him at home; he had been ordered off somewhere for a whole week. I did not wish to return to Petersburg. I trudged about the neighbouring marshes with my gun, killed a brace

[1] Or Elijah, on August 2, N. S. Generally on that day there are terrific thunder-storms, which the Russian people say are caused by the prophet ascending to heaven in his fiery chariot.—Translator.

of woodcock, and passed the evening with Tyégleff under the shed of an empty wagon-house, in which he had set up, as he expressed it, his summer residence. We chatted about various things, but chiefly drank tea, smoked our pipes, and talked now with the landlord, a Russified Finn, now with a pedlar who was roaming around the battery, a seller of "goo-o-od 'ranges and lemons," a nice fellow and droll, who, in addition to other talents, knew how to play on the guitar, and told us about the unhappy love which he had cherished in "babyhood"[1] for the daughter of a policeman. On attaining maturity this Don Juan in a shirt of cotton print had no longer experienced any unfortunate attachments.

In front of the gate of our wagon-shed a broad ravine spread out, which gradually grew deeper and deeper; a tiny rivulet sparkled in places in the windings of the rift. Further away, on the horizon, low forests were visible. Night approached and we were left alone. Along with the night there descended upon the earth a thin, damp vapour which, spreading more and more widely, was eventually converted into a dense fog. The moon rose in the sky; the whole fog became permeated through and through, and gilded, as it were, by its rays. Everything was transposed, muffled up and entangled, as it were; the distant

[1] The pedlar is, evidently, a Jew, and gets his words mixed.—Translator.

appeared near, the near distant, the large appeared small, the small large . . . . everything became bright and indistinct. We seemed to have been transported into a fairy realm, to the realm of whitish-gold fog, of profound stillness, of sensitive sleep. . . . And how mysteriously, with what silvery sparks, did the stars pierce through overhead! We both fell silent. The fantastic aspect of that night took effect upon us: it attuned us to the fantastic.

VI

Tyégleff was the first to speak, with his customary hitches, breaks, and repetitions, about forebodings . . . . about visions. On just such a night, according to his statement, one of his acquaintances, a student who had just entered on his duties as governor to two orphans, and had been lodged with them in a separate pavilion, had beheld a female figure bending over their beds, and on the following day had recognised that figure in a portrait, hitherto unperceived by him, which depicted the mother of those same orphans. Then Tyégleff declared that his parents, for the space of several days before their death, had constantly thought they heard the sound of water; that his grandfather had escaped death in the battle of Borodinó, through having seen a white pebble on the ground and stooped to pick it

up—and at that same moment a grape-shot had flown past over his head and broken off his long black plume. Tyégleff even promised to show me that same pebble which had saved his grandfather, and had been inserted by him in a locket. Then he alluded to the vocation of every man, and his own in particular, adding that he believed in it up to that moment, and that if at any time doubts should arise within him concerning it, he would know how to rid himself of them and of his life, for life would then have lost all significance for him. "Perhaps you think"—said he, casting a sidelong glance at me—"that I have not sufficient courage for that? You do not know me. . . . I have an iron will."

"Well said,"—I thought to myself.

Tyégleff became thoughtful, heaved a deep sigh, and dropping his pipe from his hand, he informed me that that was an important day for him.—"This is St. Ilyá's day,—my name-day. . . . . This . . . . this is always a painful time for me."

I made no reply and merely stared at him as he sat in front of me, bent double, round-shouldered, clumsy, with sleepy and gloomy gaze riveted on the ground.

"To-day"—he went on—"an old beggar-woman" (Tyégleff never let a single beggar pass him without bestowing alms) "told me that she would pray for my soul. . . . Is n't that strange?"

"What possesses a man to worry about himself all the time?"—I thought to myself. But I am bound to add that of late I had begun to notice an unusual expression of anxiety and trepidation on Tyégleff's face, and it was not the melancholy of a man of destiny; something was really distressing and torturing him. On this occasion, also, I was struck by the despondency which was spread over his features. Could it be that those doubts to which he had alluded were already beginning to arise within him? Tyégleff's comrades had told me that not long before he had handed to the authorities a project for certain thorough reforms "connected with the gun-carriages," and that that project had been returned to him "with an inscription," that is to say, with a reproof. Knowing his character, I did not doubt that such scorn on the part of the authorities had wounded him deeply. But that which I discerned in Tyégleff was more akin to sadness, had a more personal tinge.

"But it is growing damp,"—he suddenly said, shrugging his shoulders. "Let us go into the cottage—and it is time to go to bed."

He had a habit of twitching his shoulders and turning his head from side to side, exactly as though his neckcloth were too tight, clutching at his throat the while. Tyégleff's character was expressed—at least, so it seemed to me—in that

anxious and nervous motion. Things were too tight for him in the world also.

We returned to the cottage and lay down, each of us on the wall-bench—he in the fair corner,[1] I in the front corner, on hay, which we had spread out.

VII

Tyégleff tossed about restlessly for a long time on his bench, and I could not get to sleep. Whether it was that his stories had excited my nerves, or that that night had irritated my blood, I do not know;—only, I could not get to sleep. Every desire for sleep even vanished at last, and I lay with wide-open eyes and thought,—thought intently, God knows about what: about the veriest nonsense, as is always the case during an attack of insomnia. As I tossed from side to side I threw out my arms. . . . My finger came in contact with one of the wall beams. A faint, but resonant and prolonged sound rang out. . . . I must have hit upon a hollow place.

Again I tapped with my finger . . . . this time intentionally. The sound was repeated. I did it again. . . . Suddenly Tyégleff raised his head.

"Riedel,"—he said,—"listen; some one is knocking under the window."

[1] The corner in which the holy pictures hang—the right-hand further corner, facing the entrance door.—Translator.

I feigned to be asleep. I was suddenly seized with the whim to make sport of my "fatal" companion. It made no difference—I could not sleep.

He dropped his head on his pillow. I waited a little and again tapped three times in succession.

Again Tyégleff rose up and began to listen.

I knocked again. I was lying with my face toward him, but he could not see my hand. . . . I had thrown it backward, under the coverlet.

"Riedel!"—shouted Tyégleff.

I did not respond.

"Riedel!"—he repeated loudly.—"Riedel!"

"Hey? What is it?" I said, as though only half awake.

"Don't you hear? Some one is knocking under the window. Shall we ask him into the cottage?"

"Some wayfarer" . . . I faltered.

"Then we must admit him, or find out what sort of man he is!"

But I did not reply again, and again feigned to be asleep.

Several minutes passed. . . . Again I began my tricks. . . .

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

Through my half-closed eyelids, by the whitish nocturnal light, I could observe his movements well. He kept turning his face now to-

ward the window, now toward the door. In fact, it was difficult to distinguish whence the sound proceeded: it seemed to fly around the room, as though it were slipping along the walls. I had accidentally hit upon the acoustic chord.

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

"Riedel!" shouted Tyégleff at last.—"Riedel! Riedel!"

"Why, what is it?"—I said, yawning.

"Is it possible that you hear nothing? Some one is knocking."

"Well, God be with him—I want nothing to do with him!"—I replied, and again pretended that I had fallen asleep. I even snored. . . .

Tyégleff quieted down.

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

"Who 's there?"—shouted Tyégleff.—"Come in!"

As a matter of course, no one answered.

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

Tyégleff sprang out of bed, opened the window, and thrusting out his head, inquired in a fierce voice: "Who 's there? Who is knocking?" Then he opened the door and repeated his question. A horse neighed in the distance—and that was all.

He returned to his bed. . . .

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

Tyégleff instantly turned over and sat up.

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

Tyégleff promptly pulled on his boots, threw his cloak over his shoulders, and unhooking his sword from the wall, went out of the cottage. I heard him make the circuit of it twice, asking all the while: "Who 's there? Who goes there? Who is knocking there?" Then he suddenly fell silent, stood for a while on one spot in the street not far from the corner where I was lying, and without uttering another word returned to the cottage and lay down without undressing.

"Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ." I began again. "Knock . . . . knock . . . . knock! . . ."

But Tyégleff did not stir, did not inquire: "Who is knocking?" He merely propped his head on his hand.

Perceiving that *that* was no longer effective, after a little while I pretended to wake up, and, after casting a glance at Tyégleff, I assumed a surprised aspect.

"Have you been out anywhere?"—I asked.

"Yes," he answered indifferently.

"Did you continue to hear the knocking?"

"Yes."

"And you met no one?"

"No."

"And has the knocking stopped?"

"I don't know. It makes no difference to me now."

"Now? Why precisely now?"

Tyégleff did not answer.

I felt rather conscience-stricken and vexed at him. Nevertheless, I could not make up my mind to avow my prank.

"See here," I began:—"I am convinced that the whole thing is merely your imagination."

Tyégleff scowled.—"Ah? So you think!"

"You say that you heard a knock. . . ."

"I did not hear a knock, only," he interrupted me.

"What else did you hear?"

Tyégleff swayed forward—and bit his lips.

"They have called me!" he articulated at last, in a low tone, as he turned away his face.

"They have called you? Who has called you?"

"A . . . ."—Tyégleff continued to gaze to one side—"a being concerning whom I only assumed up to this moment that it[1] was dead. . . . But now I know it for a certainty."

"I swear to you, Ilyá Stepánitch," I exclaimed, "that that is all mere imagination!"

"Imagination?" he repeated. "Would you like to convince yourself in earnest?"

"I would."

"Well, then, let us go out into the street."

[1] The first "a" is feminine. The "it" is to agree with Tyégleff's non-committal "being," which is of the neuter gender.—TRANSLATOR.

VIII

I HASTILY dressed myself and with Tyégleff went out of the cottage. Opposite it, on the other side of the street, there were no houses, but a long wattled fence stretched out, with breaches here and there, behind which began a decidedly-steep descent to the plain. The fog, as before, enveloped all objects, and hardly anything could be seen at a distance of twenty paces. Tyégleff and I walked to the wattled fence and halted.

"Here now," he said, dropping his head. "Stand still, be silent—and listen!" Like him, I bent my ear, and save the usual, extremely faint but universal nocturnal hum—that breathing of the night—I heard nothing. From time to time exchanging a glance, we stood there motionless for several minutes—and were already preparing to move on . . . .

"Iliúsha!" I thought I heard a whisper from the other side of the fence.

I glanced at Tyégleff, but he appeared not to have heard anything, and held his head downcast as before.

"Iliúsha . . . . hey, Iliúsha . . . ." resounded more plainly than before—so plainly that one could understand that those words were uttered by a woman.

We both gave a start—and stared at each other.

"What do you think of that?" Tyégleff asked me, in a whisper. "You will not doubt now?"

"Stay," I said to him, with equal softness,—"that proves nothing as yet. We must look and see if there is not some one there—some jester. . . ."

I leaped over the fence, and walked in the direction whence, so far as I was able to judge, the voice had proceeded.

Under my feet I felt the soft, porous earth; long strips of vegetable-beds lost themselves in the fog. I was in a vegetable-garden. But nothing stirred around me, or in front of me. Everything seemed to be sunk in the numbness of sleep. I advanced a few paces further.

"Who is there?" I shouted to match Tyégleff.

"Pr-r-r-r!" A startled quail darted out from under my very feet, and flew away, as straight as a bullet. I involuntarily recoiled. . . . What nonsense! I glanced back. Tyégleff was visible on the selfsame spot where I had left him. I approached him.

"It will be useless for you to call," he said. "That voice has reached us . . . . me . . . from afar."

He passed his hand over his face, and with quiet steps wended his way across the street homeward. But I would not give in so quickly,

and returned to the vegetable-garden. That some one had actually called "Iliúsha" thrice I could not cherish the slightest doubt; I was also forced to admit to myself that there had been something plaintive and mysterious in that call. . . . . But, who knows? Perhaps all that only seemed incomprehensible, but in reality could be explained as simply as the knocking which had agitated Tyégleff.

I walked along the wattled fence, pausing and looking around me from time to time. Close to the fence and not far from our cottage grew an aged, bushy white willow; it stood out as a huge black spot in the midst of the universal whiteness of the fog, of that dim whiteness which blinds and dulls the vision worse than darkness. Suddenly I thought something of considerable size, something living, rolled over on the ground near that willow. With the exclamation: "Halt! Who is there?" I dashed forward. Light footsteps like those of a hare became audible; past me flitted a figure all bent double, whether of man or woman I could not distinguish. . . . I tried to seize it, but did not succeed, stumbling and falling and burning my face in the nettles. Rising half-way and propping myself with my elbow on the ground, I felt something hard under my arm; it was a small carved brass comb on a string, like those which our peasants wear in their belts.

Further researches on my part proved vain, and comb in hand and with nettle-burned cheeks I returned to the cottage.

IX

I FOUND Tyégleff sitting on the wall-bench. In front of him on the table burned a candle, and he was engaged in writing something in a small album which he carried constantly with him. On catching sight of me, he hastily thrust the tiny album into his pocket and began to fill his pipe.

"Here, my dear fellow,"—I began,—"see what a trophy I have brought back from my campaign!" I showed him the little comb and told him what had happened to me under the willow. —"I must have scared a thief," I added. "Did you hear that our neighbour had had a horse stolen last night?"

Tyégleff smiled coldly and lighted his pipe. I sat down by his side.

"And you are still convinced, as before, Ilyá Stepánitch,"—I said,—"that the voice which we heard had flown hither from those unknown regions . . . ."

He stopped me with an imperious gesture of his hand.

"Riedel," he began,—"I am in no mood for jesting, and therefore I beg that you will not jest either."

Tyégleff really was in no mood for jesting. His face had undergone a change. It seemed paler, more expressive. His strange, "mismatched" eyes roved quietly. "I did not think," he began again,—"that I should ever communicate to another . . . . another man that which you are about to hear, and which should have died . . . . yes, died in my breast; but, evidently, it is necessary—and I have no choice. 'T is fate! Listen."

And he communicated to me the whole story.

I have already told you, gentlemen, that he was a bad narrator; but he impressed me that night not alone by his ignorance of how to impart to me the events which had happened to him: the very sound of his voice, his looks, the movements which he made with his fingers and hands —everything about him, in a word, seemed unnatural, unnecessary,—spurious, in short. I was still very young and inexperienced, and did not know that the habit of expressing one's self in a rhetorical way, falsity of intonation and manners, may so corrode a man that he is no longer able to rid himself of it. It is a curse, in its way. I lately happened to meet a certain lady who narrated to me with such bombastic language, with such theatrical gestures, with such a melodramatic shaking of the head and rolling up of the eyes, the impression produced on her by the death of her son, her "immeasurable grief," her fears

for her own reason, that I thought to myself: "How that lady is lying and putting on airs! She did not love her son at all!" But a week later I learned that the poor woman actually had gone out of her mind. Ever since then I have been much more cautious in my judgments, and have trusted much less to my own impressions.

X

The story which Tyégleff narrated to me was, briefly, as follows:—In Petersburg—in addition to his uncle, the dignitary—dwelt an aunt of his, not a woman of great position, but possessed of property. As she was childless, she had adopted a little girl, an orphan from the petty-burgher class, had given her a suitable education, and treated her like a daughter. The girl's name was Másha. Tyégleff had been in the habit of seeing her almost every day. It ended in their falling in love with each other, and Másha gave herself to him. This came to light. Tyégleff's aunt flew into a frightful rage, turned the unhappy girl, in disgrace, out of her house, and removed her residence to Moscow, where she took a young lady of the gentry as her nursling and heiress. On returning to her former relations, poor and drunken people, Másha endured a bitter fate. Tyégleff had promised to marry her—and did not keep his promise. On the occasion of his last

meeting with her he was compelled to state his intentions. Másha wanted to learn the truth—and she got it.

"Well," she said, "if I am not to be thy wife, then I know what remains for me to do." More than a fortnight had elapsed after this last meeting.

"Not for one minute have I deceived myself as to the meaning of her last words," added Tyégleff. "I am convinced that she has put an end to her life, and . . . . and that that was *her* voice, that *she* was calling me thither . . . . after her. . . . I *recognised* her voice. . . . Well, 't is all the same in the end!"

"But why did not you marry her, Ilyá Stepánitch?" I asked. "Had you ceased to love her?"

"No; to this hour I love her passionately."

At this point, gentlemen, I stared with all my might at Tyégleff. I called to mind another of my acquaintances, a very intelligent man who, being the possessor of an extremely ill-favoured, stupid, and not wealthy wife, in reply to the question I had put to him: "Why had he married? Probably for love?"—had replied: "Not in the least for love! But it just happened so!" But here was Tyégleff passionately fond of a girl and did not marry. Well then? And here also had it "just happened so!"

"Why don't you marry?" I asked him the second time.

Tyégleff's somnolently-strange eyes wandered over the table.

"That . . . . cannot be told . . . . in a few words," he began hesitatingly. "There were reasons. . . . And besides, she . . . . is of the burgher class. Well, and my uncle . . . . I had to take him into consideration."

"Your uncle?" I cried. "But what the devil do you care for your uncle, whom you only see on New Year's Day, when you go to present your congratulations? Are you reckoning on his wealth? Why, he has about a dozen children of his own!"

I spoke with heat. . . . Tyégleff winced, and blushed . . . blushed unevenly, in spots. . . . "I beg that you will not read me a lecture," he said dully. "However, I do not defend myself. I have ruined her life, and now I must pay the debt. . . ."

He dropped his head and fell silent. I also found nothing to say.

XI

Thus we sat for a quarter of an hour. He stared to one side and I stared at him—and noticed that the hair above his brow had risen in a peculiar sort of way and was curling in rings, which, according to the remark of a military doctor, through whose hands had passed many wounded,

always serves as a sign of a strong, dry fever in the brain. . . . Again it occurred to me that the hand of Fate really did weigh upon this man, and that not without cause had his comrades perceived in him something fatal. And at the same time I inwardly condemned him. "Of the burgher class!" I thought. "But do you call yourself an aristocrat?"

"Perhaps you condemn me, Riedel," began Tyégleff, suddenly, as though divining my thoughts. "I am greatly distressed myself . . . . greatly distressed. But what can I do? What can I do?"

He leaned his chin on his palm and began to gnaw the broad, flat nails of his short, red fingers, which were as hard as iron.

"I am of the opinion, Ilyá Stepánitch, that you should first make sure whether your surmises are correct. . . . Perhaps your lady-love is alive and well." ("Shall I tell him the real cause of the knocking?" flashed through my mind. . . . "No —later on.")

"She has not written to me a single time since we have been in camp," remarked Tyégleff.

"That proves nothing, Ilyá Stepánitch."

Tyégleff waved his hand in despair.—"No! She certainly is no longer on earth. She has called me. . . ."

He suddenly turned his face toward the window.—"Some one is knocking again!"

I involuntarily burst out laughing.—"You must excuse me, Ilyá Stepánitch! This time it is your nerves. Dawn is breaking, as you see. In ten minutes the sun will rise; it is already after three o'clock, and visions do not act in daylight."

Tyégleff darted at me a gloomy glance, and muttering between his teeth, "Farewell, sir," he threw himself down on the bench and turned his back on me.

I also lay down,—and I remember that, before I fell asleep, I meditated as to why Tyégleff had kept hinting at his intention to take his own life. "What nonsense, what phrase-making! He has voluntarily refrained from marrying. . . . He has abandoned the girl . . . . and now, all of a sudden, he wants to kill himself! There is no human sense in that! He cannot keep from showing off!"

Thus thinking, I fell into a very sound sleep, and when I opened my eyes, the sun already stood high in the heavens, and Tyégleff was not in the cottage. . . .

According to his servant's statement, he had gone away to the town.

XII

I SPENT a very wearisome, irksome day. Tyégleff did not return either to dinner or to supper. I did not expect my brother. Toward evening a

thick fog, worse than that of the preceding day, spread over everything. I lay down to sleep quite early. A knock under the window awoke me.

My turn had come to start.

The knock was repeated—and with such insistent clearness that it was impossible to doubt its reality. I rose, opened the window, and perceived Tyégleff. Wrapped in his military cloak, with his forage-cap pulled down over his eyes, he was standing motionless.

"Ilyá Stepánitch!" I exclaimed,—"is it you? We had given up expecting you. Come in. Is the door locked?"

Tyégleff shook his head in negation.—"I do not intend to enter," he said dully.—"I merely wish to ask you to transmit this letter to the commander of the battery to-morrow morning."

He held out to me a large envelope sealed with five seals. I was amazed, but mechanically took the envelope. Tyégleff immediately walked off to the middle of the street.

"Wait, wait," I began. . . . "Whither are you going? Have you only just arrived? And what is this letter?"

"Do you promise to deliver it at its address?" said Tyégleff, retreating several paces further. The fog began to shroud the outlines of his figure. —"Do you promise?"

"I promise . . . but first . . . ."

Tyégleff retreated still further—and became

a dark, oblong spot.—"Farewell!" rang out his voice. "Farewell, Riedel, remember me kindly. . . . And don't forget Semyón . . . ." And even the spot disappeared.

This was too much! "O cursed phrase-maker!" I thought. "Why must thou always be striving for effect?" But I was alarmed, nevertheless. Involuntary terror oppressed my breast. I threw on my cloak and ran out into the street.

XIII

Yes; but in what direction was I to go? The fog enveloped me on all sides. One could see through it a little for five or six paces, but further than that it was fairly piled up like a wall, porous and white, like wadding. I turned to the right, along the street of the hamlet which ended just there; our cottage was the last one on the verge, and beyond it began the empty plain, here and there overgrown with bushes. Beyond the plain, a quarter of a verst distant from the hamlet, there was a birch coppice, and through it ran the same small stream which lower down made a loop around the village. All this I knew well, because I had many times beheld it all by daylight; but now I could see nothing, and could only guess, from the greater density and whiteness of the fog, where the land descended and the little river flowed. In the sky, like a pale spot, hung the

moon, but its light was not strong enough, as on the preceding night, to conquer the smoky compactness of the fog, which hung aloft like a broad, faint canopy. I made my way out on the plain and began to listen. . . . Not a sound anywhere except the whistling of the woodcock.

"Tyégleff!" I shouted. "Ilyá Stepánitch!! Tyégleff!!"

My voice died away around me without a response; it seemed as though the very fog would not permit it to go further. "Tyégleff!" I repeated.

No one answered.

I advanced at haphazard. Twice I came in contact with the wattled fence, once I almost tumbled into a ditch, and I all but stumbled over a peasant's horse which was lying on the ground. . . . "Tyégleff! Tyégleff!" I shouted.

Suddenly behind me, very close at hand indeed, I heard a low voice:—"Well, here I am. . . . . What do you want with me?"

I wheeled swiftly round.

In front of me, with pendent arms, and with no cap on his head, stood Tyégleff. His face was pale, but his eyes appeared animated and larger than usual. . . . He was inhaling long, slow breaths through his parted lips.

"God be thanked!" I cried, in an outburst of joy, seizing him by both hands. . . . "God be thanked! I was already despairing of finding

you. And are n't you ashamed of giving me such a fright? Good gracious, Ilyá Stepánitch!"

"What do you want of me?" repeated Tyégleff.

"I want . . . I want, in the first place, that you shall return home with me. And, in the second place, I wish, I demand—I demand of you, as of a friend, that you shall immediately explain to me the meaning of your behaviour—and this letter to the colonel. Has anything unexpected happened to you in Petersburg?"

"In Petersburg I found precisely what I had expected," replied Tyégleff, still not stirring from the spot.

"That is . . . . you mean to say . . . . your friend . . . . that Másha . . . ."

"She took her own life,"—interposed Tyégleff, hurriedly, and as though viciously. "She was buried the day before yesterday. She did not leave even a note for me. She poisoned herself."

Tyégleff hastily blurted out these dreadful words, and still stood motionless, as though made of stone.

I clasped my hands.—"Is it possible? What a misfortune! Your presentiment came true. . . . This is frightful!"

I fell silent in confusion. Tyégleff quietly, and as though solemnly, folded his arms.

"But why do we stand here?" I began. "Let us go home."

"Let us go," said Tyégleff. "But how are we to find the way in this fog?"

"There is a light burning in the windows of your cottage; we will guide ourselves by that. Come along."

"Do you walk ahead," replied Tyégleff. "I will follow you."

We set out. For five minutes we walked—and our guiding light did not show itself; at last it beamed out a couple of paces ahead of us in two red spots. Tyégleff walked behind me with measured tread. I was frightfully anxious to get home as promptly as possible and learn from him the particulars of his unhappy trip to Petersburg. Stunned by what he had told me, in a fit of repentance and partly of superstitious dread, I confessed to him before we reached the cottage that I had produced the mysterious knocking of the night before . . . and what a tragic turn that jest had taken!

Tyégleff confined himself to the remark that I counted for nothing in the matter,—that my hand had been guided by something else,—and that that only proved how little I knew him. His voice, strangely quiet and even, sounded directly in my ear.—"But you will learn to know me," he added. "I saw you smile yesterday when I alluded to my strength of will. You will learn to know me —and you will recall my words."

The first cottage in the village surged up in

front of us out of the fog, like some dark monster . . . . and now the second started forth, our cottage started forth—and my setter hound, probably scenting me, began to bark.

I knocked at the window.—"Semyón!"—I shouted to Tyégleff's servant:—"hey, there, Semyón! Open the gate to us as quickly as possible!"

The gate clanged and opened; Semyón stepped across the threshold.

"Pray, enter, Ilyá Stepánitch," I said, glancing round. . . .

But there was no longer any Ilyá Stepánitch behind me. Tyégleff had disappeared as though the earth had swallowed him.

I entered the cottage like a man bereft of his reason.

XIV

Vexation at Tyégleff, at myself, superseded the amazement which at first took possession of me.—"Thy master is crazy!" I said, darting at Semyón—"downright crazy! He galloped off to Petersburg, then he came back—and now he is running about at random! I caught him, and brought him to the very gate—and suddenly, bang! he has taken to his heels again! The idea of not staying at home on such a night! A pretty time he has chosen for a ramble!"

"And why did I let go of his hand?" I reproached myself.

Semyón stared in silence at me, as though preparing to say something, but, in accordance with the habits of servants in those days, he merely shifted from foot to foot a little.

"At what o'clock did he go off to the city?" I inquired severely.

"At six o'clock in the morning."

"And how did he seem—troubled, sad?"

Semyón cast down his eyes.—"Our master—is queer," he began. "Who can understand him?—When he was preparing to go to the city, he ordered me to give him his new uniform; well, and he curled himself, also."

"How curled himself?"

"Curled his hair. I fixed the tongs for him."

I must confess that I had not anticipated this.—"Art thou acquainted with a young lady," I asked Semyón,—"a friend of Ilyá Stepánitch's, named Másha?"

"Of course I know Márya Anempodístovna! She 's a nice young lady."

"Thy master was in love with that Márya .... and so forth."

Semyón heaved a sigh.—"It 's on account of that young lady that Ilyá Stepánitch will go to destruction. He loves her frightfully—and he can't make up his mind to take her as his spouse—and he 's sorry to abandon her, too. That

comes from his lack of courage. He 's awfully fond of her."

"And what is she like—pretty?" I inquired curiously.

Semyón assumed a serious aspect.—"Gentlemen like such as she."

"And is she to thy taste?"

"For us . . . . she is not suited—not at all."

"Why not?"

"She 's very thin in body."

"If she were to die," I began again,—"would Ilyá Stepánitch survive her, thinkest thou?"

Again Semyón heaved a sigh.—"I dare not say that—that 's the master's affair. . . . Only, our master—is queer!"

I took from the table the large and fairly thick letter which Tyégleff had given to me, and turned it about in my hands. . . . The address to "His High-Born, Mr. Battery Commander, Colonel and Cavalier," with name, patronymic and surname indicated, was very distinctly and carefully written. In the upper corner of the envelope stood the word: "Important," twice underlined.

"Hearken, Semyón," I began. "I 'm afraid for thy master. He seems to have evil thoughts in his head. We must find him without fail."

"I obey, sir," replied Semyón.

"There is such a fog outdoors that one can

distinguish nothing two arshíns [1] off, it is true; but never mind, we must make the effort. We will each take a lantern, and we will light a candle in each window—in case of need."

"I obey, sir," repeated Semyón. He lighted the lanterns and the candles and we set out.

XV

How he and I wandered about, how entangled we became, it is impossible to convey to you! The lanterns did not help us in the least; they did not in the slightest degree disperse that white, almost luminous mist which surrounded us. Semyón and I lost each other several times apiece, despite the fact that we kept exchanging calls, shouting "a-oo!" and I kept crying out: "Tyégleff! Ilyá Stepánitch!" and he: "Mr. Tyégleff! Your Well-Born!"—The fog threw us off the track to such a degree that we roamed about as though in our sleep; both of us speedily grew hoarse: the dampness penetrated to the very bottom of our lungs. We met again, by some means, thanks to the lights in the windows at the cottage. Our combined explorations had led to nothing,—we had merely hampered each other,—and therefore we decided not to think any more of how to avoid getting separated, but that each of us should go

[1] The arshín—the Russian yard-measure—is twenty-eight inches in length.—TRANSLATOR.

his own road. He went to the left, I to the right, and I soon ceased to hear his voice. The fog seemed to have made its way into my very brain, and I wandered about like a dazed person, merely shouting: "Tyégleff! Tyégleff!"

"Here!" suddenly rang out in response.

Heavens! How delighted I was! How I rushed in the direction where I had heard the voice! . . . . A human figure loomed up black ahead of me. . . . I darted at it. . . . At last!

But instead of Tyégleff I beheld before me another officer of the same battery named Telépneff."

"Was it *you* who answered me?" I asked him.

"And were you calling me?" he inquired, in his turn.

"No; I was calling Tyégleff."

"Tyégleff? Why, I met him only a moment ago. What an absurd night! It is utterly impossible to find one's way home."

"You saw Tyégleff? In which direction was he going?"

"In that direction—I think." The officer passed his hand through the air.—"But now it is impossible to understand anything. For example, do you know where the village is? The only salvation is if a dog should begin to bark. An abominable night, is n't it? Allow me to light a cigar . . . . it will seem to illuminate the road."

The officer was a little tipsy, so far as I could make out.

"Did not Tyégleff say anything to you?" I asked.

"Certainly he did! 'How art thou, brother?' says I to him. And he says to me: 'Farewell, brother!'—'Farewell? Why farewell?'—'Why,' says he, 'I 'm going to shoot m'self with pistol 's very minute.' A queer fellow!"

I gasped for breath.—"You say that he told you . . . ."

"A queer fellow!" repeated the officer, as he strode away from me.

Before I could recover from the officer's announcement, my own name, several times repeated in a violent shout, struck my ear. I recognised Semyón's voice.

I responded. . . . He approached me.

XVI

"Well, what is it?" I asked him. "Hast thou found Ilyá Stepánitch?"

"I have, sir."

"Where?"

"Yonder, not far from here."

"How didst thou . . . . find him? Is he alive?"

"Certainly; I conversed with him." (My heart was lightened.) "He is sitting under a

small birch-tree, in his cloak . . . . and he 's all right. I reported to him: ' Please come to your quarters, Ilyá Stepánitch," says I, ' Alexander Vasílitch is very uneasy about you.' But he says to me: ' What possesses him to be uneasy? I want to be in the fresh air. My head aches. Go home,' says he. ' I 'll come after a while.' "

" And didst thou leave him? " I exclaimed, wringing my hands.

" And why not, sir? He ordered me to go away . . . . how could I stay? "

All my terrors returned to me at once.

" Lead me to him this very minute, dost hear? This very minute! Ekh, Semyón, Semyón, I did not expect this of thee! Thou sayest that he is not far from here? "

" Quite close, yonder where the grove begins— that 's where he is sitting. About two fathoms— not more—from the creek, from the shore. I found him by going along the creek."

" Come, guide me, guide me! "

Semyón set out. " Here, this way, if you please. . . . . We have only to descend to the stream, and then we shall immediately . . . ."

But instead of descending to the creek we got into some sort of a ravine and found ourselves in front of a small, empty shed. . . .

" Hey! Halt! " suddenly exclaimed Semyón. " I must have gone too far to the right. . . . We must turn more to the left here. . . ."

We went further to the left, and got into such a dense mass of steppe grass that we could hardly extricate ourselves . . . so far as I could recollect, there was no such high grass anywhere in the vicinity of our village. Then suddenly marshy ground began to seep under our feet, and round, mossy tussocks, which I had never seen, either, began to make their appearance. . . . We retraced our steps—before us uprose a hillock, and on the hillock stood a hovel, and in it some one was snoring. Semyón and I shouted several times into the hovel; something fumbled about in its recesses, straw crackled, and a hoarse voice ejaculated: "Po-o-li-i-ice!"

Again we retraced our steps . . . . fields, fields, interminable fields. . . .

I was ready to weep. . . . I recalled the words of the fool in "King Lear": "This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen!"

"Where shall we go?" I said, in despair, to Semyón.

"Evidently, master, the forest fiend has cheated us," replied the discomfited orderly. "There 's some mischief abroad. . . . An evil power is at work!"

I was on the point of scolding him, but at that moment there reached my ear an isolated, not very loud sound which instantly attracted my entire attention. Something popped faintly, as though some one had extracted a tight-fitting cork from

the narrow neck of a bottle. The sound rang out not far from the spot where I was standing. Why that sound seemed to me peculiar and strange I am unable to say, but I immediately walked in the direction whence it had proceeded.

Semyón followed me. At the end of a few moments something tall and broad loomed up darkly through the fog.

"The grove! There it is, the grove!" exclaimed Semyón, joyfully; "and yonder . . . . yonder my master is sitting under the birch-tree, where I left him. 'T is he himself!"

I looked intently. In fact, on the ground, at the foot of a birch, with his back toward us, awkwardly bent over, a man was sitting. I briskly approached him and recognised Tyégleff's cloak,—recognised his figure, his head bowed on his breast.

"Tyégleff!" I shouted. . . . But he did not reply.

"Tyégleff!" I repeated, laying my hand on his shoulder.

Then he suddenly swayed forward, quickly and obediently, as though he had been awaiting my touch, and fell prone upon the grass. Semyón and I immediately lifted him and turned his face upward. It was not pale, but inanimately impassive; the clenched teeth shone white, and the eyes, also, motionless and open, preserved their customary sleepy and "mismatched" glance. . . .

"O Lord!"—said Semyón, suddenly, showing me his hand crimsoned with blood. . . . This blood was flowing from beneath Tyégleff's unfastened cloak, from the left side of his breast.

He had shot himself with a small, single-barrelled pistol which lay there by his side. The faint sound which I had heard had been the sound produced by the fatal shot.

XVII

Tyégleff's suicide did not greatly surprise his comrades. I have already told you that, according to their view, he, as a "fatal" man, was bound to indulge in some unusual performance, although possibly they had not expected from him precisely this caper. In his letter to the commander of the battery he requested the latter, in the first place, to attend to having Sub-Lieutenant Ilyá Tyégleff stricken from the rolls as a suicide, stating, in this connection, that in his casket there would be found more than enough ready money to pay all debts which might be claimed; and, in the second place, to transmit to an important personage, who then was in command of all the corps of the Guard, another, unsealed letter, which was enclosed in the same envelope. We all read this second letter, as a matter of course; several of us took copies of it. Tyégleff had obviously toiled over the composition of that letter.

"Just see, Your Royal Highness,"[1] thus it began, as I recall it, "how strict you are, how sternly you punish for the slightest irregularity in a uniform, for the most insignificant infringement of regulations when a poor, trembling officer presents himself before you; but now I am presenting myself before the incorruptible, upright Judge of us all, before the Supreme Being, before the Being who is of immeasurably greater importance than even Your Royal Highness, and I am presenting myself quite simply, in my cloak, without even a stock on my neck. . . ." Akh, what an oppressive and unpleasant impression was made upon me by this phrase, every word, every letter of which was carefully set forth in the dead man's childish chirography! Was it really worth while, I asked myself—was it really worth while to devise such nonsense at such a moment? But Tyégleff had, evidently, taken a liking to this phrase; for he had put in play all the heaping up of epithets and amplifications, *à la Márlinsky,* which was then in fashion. Further on he alluded to Fate, to persecution, to his mission, which would remain unfulfilled; to the secret which he was carrying with him into the grave; to the people who had refused to understand

[1] The title is intentionally abbreviated in the original, and the word might mean either Majesty, or Royal Highness as printed. The latter must be intended, and probably the Grand Duke Mikhaíl Pávlovitch, a renowned martinet, in particular.—TRANSLATOR.

him; he even quoted the verses of some poet or other who had said of the crowd that it wears life "like a dog's collar," and eats into vice "like a burdock"—and all this not without orthographical errors. Truth to tell, this ante-mortem letter of poor Tyégleff was decidedly insipid, and I can imagine the scornful surprise of the exalted personage to whom it was addressed; I can imagine in what a tone he must have ejaculated: "A worthless officer! A good riddance to bad rubbish!" Just before the end of the letter a genuine cry burst from Tyégleff's heart. "Akh, Your Royal Highness!" thus he wound up his epistle,—"I am an orphan, I have had no one to love me from my childhood, and every one has fought shy of me . . . . and the only heart which gave itself to me I myself have destroyed!"

In the pocket of Tyégleff's cloak Semyón found the tiny album from which his master never parted. But almost all the leaves had been torn out; only one remained intact, upon which stood the following calculation:

Napoleon, born Aug. 15, 1769.		Ilyá Tyégleff, born Jan. 7, 1811.	
1769		1811	
15		7	
8	(Aug. is eighth month in year.)	1	(Jan. is first month in year.)
Total 1792		Total 1819	

1	1
7	8
9	1
2	9
Total **19!**	Total **19!**

Napoleon died May 5, 1825.

1825	
5	
5	(May is fifth month in year.)
Total 1835	
1	
8	
3	
5	
Total **17!**	

Ilyá Tyégleff died July 21, 1834.

1834	
21	
7	(July is seventh month in year.)
Total 1862	
1	
8	
6	
2	
Total **17!**	

Poor fellow! Was not that the reason that he had entered the artillery?

They buried him, being a suicide, outside the cemetery, and immediately forgot him.

XVIII

On the day after Tyégleff's funeral (I was still in the village, awaiting my brother) Semyón entered the cottage and announced that Ilyá wished to see me.

"What Ilyá?" I asked.

"Why, our pedlar."

I ordered him to be called in.

He presented himself. He expressed some slight regret concerning the sub-lieutenant, and surprise that he should have taken such a thing into his head. . . .

"Was he in debt to thee?" I asked.

"Not at all, sir. Whatever he bought from me he paid for punctually on the spot. But it 's this, sir. . . ." Here the pedlar grinned.—"You have a small article of mine. . . ."

"What article?"

"Why, that one, sir." He pointed with his finger at the carved comb which was lying on the toilet-table.—"'T is an article of small value, sir," —went on the huckster,—"but seeing that I received it as a present . . ."

I suddenly raised my head. An idea struck me like a flash of light.

"Is thy name Ilyá?"

"Exactly so, sir."

"So it was thee whom I . . . found the other day . . . . under the willow?"

The pedlar winked and grinned still more broadly.

"'T was me, sir."

"And it was *thee* whom some one was calling?"

"'T was me, sir," repeated the pedlar, with playful modesty. "There 's a lass yonder," he went on, in a falsetto voice, "who, on account

of very great strictness on the part of her parents . . . ."

" Good, good," I interrupted him, handing him the comb and sending him away.

So that was the " Iliúsha,"—I thought, and plunged into philosophical reflections which, however, I will not repeat to you, for I have no intention of preventing any one from believing in Fate, predestination, and other fatalities.

On returning to Petersburg I made inquiries about Másha. I even hunted up the doctor who had attended her. To my amazement, I learned from him that she did not die of poison but of the cholera! I communicated to him what I had heard from Tyégleff.

" Ho! ho! " exclaimed the doctor. " Was that Tyégleff an artillery officer of medium height with round shoulders and a lisp? "

" Yes."

" Well, that 's it exactly. That gentleman presented himself to me—I beheld him then for the first time—and began to insist upon it that the girl had poisoned herself. ' It was the cholera,' said I. ' It was poison,' said he. ' But 't was the cholera,' said I. ' But 't was poison,' said he. I saw that the man was rather daft, with a broad nape which indicates stubbornness, and it would not be a short job to get rid of him. . . . It makes no difference, I thought to myself; the patient is dead anyway. . . . ' Well, then,' said I,

' she did poison herself, if that is more agreeable to you.' He thanked me, he even shook hands with me—and took himself off."

I told the doctor how that same officer had shot himself that very same day.

The doctor never so much as moved an eyebrow —and merely remarked that there were various sorts of eccentric folk in the world.

" There are," I repeated after him.

Yes, some one has truly said concerning suicides that until they carry out their design no one believes them; and if they do, no one regrets them.

THE WATCH

(1875)

THE WATCH

AN OLD MAN'S STORY

I

I WILL tell you my story about the watch.... A curious story!

The affair took place at the very beginning of the present century, in the year 1801. I had just entered my sixteenth year. I lived in Ryazán, in a little wooden house not far from the bank of the Oká, with my father, my aunt, and my cousin. I do not remember my mother; she died three years after her marriage. My father had no children except me. His name was Porfíry Petróvitch. He was a peaceable man, not good-looking, and sickly; his business consisted of prosecuting lawsuits—and of other things. In former times men like him were called pettifoggers, shysters, nettle-seed; he dignified himself with the title of lawyer. Our domestic affairs were presided over by his sister, my aunt, —an old maid of fifty; my father also was over forty. She was a very pious woman—to speak

the plain truth, a hypocrite, a tattler, and given to poking her nose into everything; and her heart was not like my father's—it was not kind. We did not live poorly, but on the verge of that. My father had also a brother, Egór[1] by name; but he had been sent to Siberia for some alleged "seditious acts and Jacobinical manner of thought"—or other (precisely so did it stand in the decree).

Egór's son, Davíd, my cousin, was left on my father's hands and lived with us. He was only one year older than I; but I abased myself before him and obeyed him as though he had been a full-grown man. He was far from a stupid lad, with strong character, broad-shouldered, stockily built, with a square face all covered with freckles, red hair, grey eyes, small, broad lips, a short nose, also short fingers—what is called a strong man—and with a strength beyond his years. My aunt could not bear him; and my father was even afraid of him . . . or, perhaps he felt himself culpable toward him. A rumour was current that had not my father blabbed, Davíd's father would not have been exiled to Siberia! We both studied in the gymnasium, in the same class, and both did pretty well; I even a trifle better than Davíd. . . . I had a keen memory; but boys—as every one knows—do not prize *that* superiority and do not

[1] That is, George; pronounced Yegór.—Translator.

plume themselves on it, and Davíd remained, nevertheless, my leader.

II

My name, as you know, is Alexyéi. I was born on the seventh of March, and my name-day comes on the seventeenth. According to ancient custom, they bestowed upon me the name of one of those saints whose day falls upon the tenth day after the child's birth. My godfather was a certain Anastásy Anastásievitch Putchkóff; or, properly speaking, Nastásyei, Nastásyeitch; no one ever called him anything else. He was a frightfully-litigious man, a caviller and bribe-taker—a bad man altogether; he had been expelled from the Governor's chancellery, and had been indicted more than once; he was necessary to my father. . . . They "did business" in company. He was plump and round in person; but his face was like that of a fox, with an awl-shaped nose; his bright brown eyes were also like those of a fox. And he kept those eyes of his in incessant motion, to right and left, and kept his nose in motion also, as though he were sniffing the air. He wore heelless shoes and powdered his hair every day, which was then regarded as a great rarity in country parts. He was wont to declare that he could not get along without powder, as he was

obliged to consort with generals and generalesses.

So, then, my name-day arrives. Nastásyei Nastásyeitch comes to our house and says:

"Up to this time, godson, I have never given thee anything; but just see what I have brought thee to-day!"

And thereupon he pulls out of his pocket a bulbous silver watch, with a rose painted on the face, and a brass chain! I was fairly dumbfounded with rapture,—but my aunt, Pulkhériya[1] Petróvna, began to scream at the top of her voice:

"Kiss his hand, kiss his hand, dirty brat!"

I began to kiss my godfather's hand, while my aunt kept interpolating:

"Akh, dear little father, Nastásyei Nastásyeitch, why do you spoil him so? How will he be able to manage a watch? He 'll drop it, for a certainty, and will smash it or break it!"

My father entered the room, looked at the watch, thanked Nastásyeitch in a careless sort of way, and asked him to come into his study. And I heard my father saying, as though to himself:

"If thou hast taken it into thy head, my good fellow, to get out of it in *this* way . . . ."

But I could not stand still on one spot any

[1] Turgénieff calls her part of the time Pelagéya, part of the time Pulkhériya.—Translator.

longer, so I put on my watch and rushed off headlong to show my gift to Davíd.

III

Davíd took the watch, opened it and scrutinised it attentively. He had great gifts in the mechanical line; he was fond of tinkering with iron, brass, and all metals; he had provided himself with various instruments, and to repair a screw, or a key—or make an entirely new one, and so forth, was nothing for him.

Davíd turned the watch about in his hands, and muttered through his teeth (he was, in general, not talkative):

"Old . . . . bad. . . . Where didst thou get it?" he added.

I told him that my godfather had given it to me.

Davíd turned his small grey eyes on me:

"Nastásyei?"

"Yes; Nastásyei Nastásyeitch."

Davíd laid the watch on the table and walked off in silence.

"Dost not thou like it?" I asked.

"No; that 's not it. . . . But if I were in thy place, I would n't accept any gift from Nastásyei."

"Why not?"

"Because he is a worthless man; and one should

not lay himself under obligations to a worthless man. I suppose thou didst kiss his hand?"

"Yes, aunty made me."

Davíd laughed,—in a peculiar sort of way, through his nose. It was a habit of his. He never laughed aloud; he regarded laughter as a sign of pusillanimity.

Davíd's words, his noiseless smile, pained me deeply. He must be blaming me inwardly, I thought! I must also be a worthless creature in his eyes! He would never have lowered himself to that, he would not have accepted a gift from Nastásyei! But what was left for me to do now?

It was impossible to give back the watch!

I made an effort to talk with Davíd, to ask his advice. He answered me that he never gave advice to any one, and that I must act as I saw fit.—"As I saw fit?" I remember that I did not sleep all night afterward; I was tortured by thought. I was sorry to part from the watch—so I placed it beside my bed, on the night-stand; it ticked so pleasingly and amusingly. . . But to feel that Davíd despised me . . . . (but it was impossible to deceive myself on that score! he did despise me!) . . . seemed to me unbearable! Toward morning my decision matured. . . . I cried a little, to tell the truth, but I went to sleep after that, and as soon as I awoke I dressed myself in haste, and ran out into the street. I had made up my mind to give my watch away to the first beggar I met.

IV

I HAD not succeeded in running very far from the house when I hit upon that of which I was in search. I came across a barefooted, tattered urchin aged ten, who often lounged past our windows. I immediately ran up to him, and without giving either him or myself time to change our minds, I offered him my watch.

The lad opened his eyes very wide, screened his mouth with one hand, as though he were afraid of scorching himself, and stretched out the other.

"Take it, take it," I stammered,—"it is mine; I make thee a present of it; thou mayest sell it and buy thyself . . . Well, then, something thou needest. . . . Good-bye!"

I thrust the watch into his hand, and started for home at full tilt. After standing for a while behind the door in our common bedroom and getting my breath, I stepped up to Davíd, who had only just completed his toilet and was brushing his hair. "Here, Davíd," I began, in as calm a voice as I could command,—"I have given away Nastásyei's watch."

Davíd glanced at me as he passed the brush over his temples.

"Yes," I added, in the same business-like tone, "I have given it away. There 's a very poor little boy out there, a beggar; so I gave it to him."

Davíd laid down his brush on the wash-stand.

"For the money which he can get for it," I went on, "he can purchase some useful article. He will get something for it, anyhow."

I ceased speaking.

"Well, all right! 'T is a good thing!" said Davíd at last, and went off to the school-room.

I followed him.

"And what if thou art asked what thou hast done with it?"—he said, turning to me.

"I will say that I have lost it," I replied carelessly.

We said nothing further to each other that day about the watch; but, nevertheless, it struck me that Davíd not only approved of me, but even, to a certain degree, was amazed at me.—Really!

V

Two days more passed. It so happened that no one in the house bethought himself of the watch. My father had a very great row with one of his clients; he was in no mood to think of me or of my watch. On the other hand, I thought of it incessantly! Even the approbation . . . . the presumptive approbation of Davíd did not afford me much consolation. He did not express it in any particular manner; he never said but

once—and that in passing—that he had not expected such daring from me. Positively, my sacrifice had been a disadvantage to me; it was not counterbalanced by the satisfaction which my vanity afforded.

But at this point, as though expressly, there must needs turn up another gymnasium lad, an acquaintance of ours, the son of the town physician, and begin to brag of a new watch—of pinchbeck, not of silver—which his grandmother had given him. . . . At last I could hold out no longer, and slipping quietly out of the house, I set forth to hunt up that beggar lad to whom I had given my watch.

I soon found him; he, together with other boys, was playing at knuckle-bones on the church porch. I called him to one side, and, panting and entangling myself in my speech, I told him that my family were angry with me for having given away my watch, and that if he would consent to restore it to me, I would gladly pay him money for it. . . . I had taken with me, in case of emergency, an old-fashioned ruble of the time of the Empress Elizabeth, which constituted my entire cash capital. . . .

"Why, I have n't got it, that watch of yours," —replied the urchin, in an angry, snivelling voice. "Daddy saw it and took it away from me; and he was going to thrash me to boot. 'Thou

must have stolen it somewhere,' said he. 'What fool would give thee a watch?'"

"And who is thy father?"

"My father? Trofímitch."

"But who is he? What is his business?"

"He 's a retired soldier—a srageant. And he has n't any business. He cobbles old shoes, and sews on soles. That 's all the business he has. And he lives by it."

"Where is your lodging? Take me to him."

"I 'll take you. You just say to him, to my daddy, that you gave me the watch. For he is scolding me all the time. 'Thou 'rt a thief; yes, a thief!' And my mother does the same: 'From whom didst thou inherit this thieving?' says she."

The boy and I wended our way to his lodging. It was situated in a fowl-house, in the back yard of a factory which had been burned down long, long before and never rebuilt. We found both Trofímitch and his wife at home. The retired "srageant" was a tall old man, sinewy and erect, with yellowish-grey side-whiskers, unshaven chin, and a whole network of wrinkles on his cheeks and forehead. His wife appeared to be older than he; her little red eyes blinked and puckered mournfully in the midst of a bloated and sickly face. Both of them were draped in some sort of dark rags instead of garments.

I explained the affair to Trofímitch, and why I had come. He listened to me in silence, never

once winking, or removing from me his dull and strained, regular soldier's glance.

"Mischievous tricks!" he said at last, in a hoarse, toothless voice.—"Do well-born gentlemen behave like that? But if Pétka really did not steal the watch—I'll give it to him for that!—w-w-whack! Take that for playing with young gentlemen! But if he had stolen it I would n't have treated him like that! w-whack! w-whack! w-whack! with rods, in calergard [1] style! Who cares? What 's that? Hey? Give him the spontoons! So that 's the story?! Faugh!"

This last exclamation Trofímitch uttered in a falsetto voice. He was evidently perplexed.

"If you will return my watch to me," I explained to him . . . . I did not dare to address him as "thou," notwithstanding the fact that he was a common soldier . . . . "I will pay you this ruble with pleasure. I don't suppose it is worth any more than that."

"C-c-come!"—growled Trofímitch, without recovering from his perplexity, and devouring me with his eyes, out of old habit, as though I had been some superior officer or other.—"A fine business—hey?—Well now, just think of it! . . . Hold thy tongue, Ulyána!" he snarled at his wife, who had begun to open her mouth.—"Here 's the watch," he added, opening the table

[1] Cavalier-guard.—Translator.

drawer.—"If it really is yours, please to take it. But what 's the ruble for? Hey?"

"Take the ruble, Trofímitch, good-for-nothing!" roared his wife.—"The old man has outlived his mind! He has n't a penny to his name, and here he is putting on pompous airs! 'T was in vain they cut off thy queue, for thou art as much of a woman as ever!—so thou art—and knowest nothing. Accept the money, if thou hast taken it into thy head to give back the watch!"

"Hold thy tongue, Ulyána, thou good-for-nothing!" repeated Trofímitch.—"Who ever heard of a woman's putting in her word? Hey? The husband is the head; but she puts in her word! Pétka, don't stir or I 'll kill thee! . . . Here 's the watch!" Trofímitch reached out the watch to me, but did not let it out of his fingers.

He pondered, dropped his eyes, then riveted upon me the same intently-dull gaze, and suddenly began to bawl at the top of his lungs:

"But where is it? Where 's that ruble?"

"Here it is, here," I hastily said, pulling the money from my pocket.

But he did not take it, and kept staring at me. I laid the ruble on the table. He suddenly swept it into the drawer, flung my watch at me, and wheeling round to the left and stamping his foot violently, he hissed at his wife and son:

"Begone, riffraff!"

Ulyána stammered something or other, but I had already darted out into the courtyard, into the street. Thrusting my watch to the very bottom of my pocket, and gripping it tightly in my hand, I dashed headlong homeward.

VI

I HAD again entered into possession of my watch, but got no satisfaction whatever out of it. I could not make up my mind to wear it; I must hide it most of all from Davíd, which I did. What would he think of me and my lack of character? I could not even lock that unlucky watch up in a drawer. We had all our drawers in common. I was forced to hide it, now on the top of the wardrobe, now under the mattress, now behind the stove. . . . And yet I did not succeed in deceiving Davíd!

One day, having the watch out from under the floor of our room, I took it into my head to rub up its silver back with an old chamois-skin glove. Davíd had gone off somewhere in the town; I was not in the least expecting that he would speedily return . . . when suddenly in he walked!

I was so disconcerted that I almost dropped the watch, and, all abashed, with face flushing to a painful degree, I set to sliding it about over my waistcoat, being utterly unable to hit my pocket.

Davíd looked at me, and smiled silently, according to his wont.

"What ails thee?" he said at last.—"Dost thou think I did not know that thou hadst the watch again? I saw it the very first day thou didst bring it back."

"I assure thee," I began, almost in tears . . . .

Davíd shrugged his shoulders.

"The watch is thine; thou art free to do with it what thou wilt."

Having uttered these cruel words, he left the room.

Despair seized upon me. There was no doubt about it this time; Davíd really did despise me!

Matters could not be left in this condition.

"I 'll just show him!" I thought to myself, setting my teeth; and immediately betaking myself with firm tread to the anteroom, I hunted up our page-boy Yúshka, and made him a present of the watch!

Yúshka tried to decline it, but I declared to him that if he did not take that watch from me I would smash it on the instant, I would trample it under foot, I would fling it into the cesspool! He reflected, giggled, and took the watch. And I returned to our room, and seeing Davíd, who was engaged in reading a book, I told him what I had done.

Davíd did not remove his eyes from the page, and again said, shrugging his shoulders and smil-

ing to himself,—"The watch is thine, and thou art free to dispose of it."

But it seemed to me that he despised me somewhat less.

I was fully convinced that I should never again subject myself to a fresh reproach for lack of character; for that watch, that hateful gift of my hateful godfather, had suddenly become so loathsome to me that I even was not able to comprehend how I had regretted it, how I could have wheedled it out of that person named Trofímitch, who, moreover, still had a right to think that he had treated me with magnanimity.

Several days passed. . . . I remember that on one of them a great piece of news reached our town; the Emperor Paul was dead, and his son Alexander, concerning whose benignity and humanity such good rumours were in circulation, had ascended the throne. This news threw Davíd into a frightful state of agitation; the possibility of seeing his father, of seeing him soon, immediately presented itself to him. My papa was also delighted.

"All exiles will now be brought back from Siberia, and I suppose they will not forget brother Egór either," he kept repeating, as he rubbed his hands and cleared his throat, and, at the same time, appeared to be struck with consternation.

Davíd and I immediately ceased to work, and did not go to the gymnasium; we did not even

stroll about, but sat constantly somewhere in a corner, reckoning up and discussing in how many months, how many weeks, how many days "brother Egór" would be brought back, and where we might write to him, and how we should go to meet him, and in what manner we should begin to live afterward. "Brother Egór" was an architect; Davíd and I decided that he must settle in Moscow and there erect great school-houses for poor people, while we would act as his assistants. As a matter of course, we completely forgot the watch; moreover, new anxieties had cropped up for Davíd . . . . of which more hereafter; but the watch was destined to remind us of its existence.

VII

One morning just as we had finished breakfast, I was sitting alone near the window and meditating about my uncle's return—an April thaw was steaming and glittering out of doors—when suddenly Pulkhériya Petróvna ran into the room. She was fussy and fidgety at all times, talked in a squeaking voice, and was incessantly flourishing her hands, but on this occasion she fairly pounced upon me.

"Come along! come along to thy father this very instant, young sir!" she cackled. "What pranks are these thou hast been up to, thou

shameless wretch?—You 'll catch it, both of you! Nastásyei Nastásyeitch has brought all your tricks to light. . . . Come along! Thy father wants thee. . . . Go this very instant!"

Still comprehending nothing, I followed my aunt; and as I crossed the threshold of the drawing-room I beheld my father pacing back and forth with huge strides, and rumpling up his crest of hair, Yúshka in tears by the door, and in the corner, on a chair, my godfather, Nastásyei Nastásyeitch, with an expression of peculiarly-malign joy in his inflated nostrils and blazing, squinting eyes.

As soon as I entered, my father flew at me.

"Didst thou give the watch to Yúshka? Tell me!"

I glanced at Yúshka. . . .

"Come, speak!" repeated my father, stamping his foot.

"Yes," I replied, and immediately received a swingeing box on the ear, which afforded great satisfaction to my aunt. I heard her grunt, exactly as though she had swallowed a mouthful of boiling tea.—From me my father rushed to Yúshka.

"And thou, scoundrel, shouldst not have presumed to accept the watch as a gift," he said, pulling the boy about by his hair;—"and thou hast sold it into the bargain, thou rascal!"

Yúshka, as I afterward learned, in simplic-

ity of heart, actually had carried my watch to a neighbouring watchmaker.—The watchmaker had hung it up in his window; Nastásyei Nastásyeitch had espied it in passing, had purchased it and brought it to our house.

But the chastisement of myself and Yúshka did not last long; my father got to panting, and began to cough; and it was not in his nature, either, to get angry.

"Dear brother, Porfíry Petróvitch," said my aunt, as soon as she saw—not without some regret, of course—that my father's wrath had died down, as the saying is,—"pray, do not worry yourself further; it is not worth soiling your hands about. But this is what I would suggest: with the consent of our respected Nastásyei Nastásyeitch, and by reason of your little son's great ingratitude, I will take possession of this watch; and since he has shown by his act that he is unworthy to wear it, and does not even understand its value, I will make a gift of it, in your name, to a man who will be very appreciative of your kindness."

"Who is he?" inquired my father.

"Why, Khrisánfa Lúkitch," said my aunt, with a little hesitation.

"Khrisáshka?"[1] cross-questioned my father; and with a wave of his hand he added:—"'T is all one to me. Fling it into the stove if you like."

[1] The scornful diminutive.—Translator.

He buttoned up his under waistcoat, which was open on the breast, and left the room, writhing with a cough.

"And do you consent, my dear man?" said my aunt, addressing Nastásyei Nastásyeitch.

"With the greatest readiness," replied the latter. Throughout the whole duration of the "chastisement" he had not stirred on his chair, and merely sniffing softly, and softly rubbing together the tips of his fingers, he had turned his foxy eyes upon me, my father and Yúshka by turns. We afforded him genuine satisfaction! . . . .

My aunt's suggestion agitated me to the bottom of my soul. I was not sorry for the watch; but I heartily detested the man to whom she was preparing to give it.—This Khrisánfa Lúkitch, whose surname was Trankvillitátin,[1] a healthy, robust, lank student in the ecclesiastical seminary, had acquired a habit of coming to our house —the devil only knows why! "To teach the *children,*" my aunt asserted; but he could not teach us, for the simple reason that he himself had learned nothing to teach, and was as stupid as a horse. Altogether, he resembled a horse: he clattered his feet exactly as though they were hoofs; he did not laugh—he neighed, dis-

[1] An absurd surname of this sort, or one manufactured from the title of a religious festival or something similar, is an infallible sign that the owner belongs to, or is descended from, the ecclesiastical caste.—TRANSLATOR.

playing the whole of his jaws down to his very gullet in the process; and he had a long face, a nose with a hump, and large, flat cheek-bones; he wore a shaggy frieze kaftan, and emitted an odour of raw meat. My aunt fairly worshipped him and called him a distinguished man, a cavalier, and even a grenadier. He had a habit of rapping children on the forehead (he had rapped me also, when I was younger) with the nails of his long fingers, which were as hard as stone, and as he tapped he would guffaw and express surprise. "How thy head resounds!" he would say. "That signifies that it is empty!" And this lout was to possess my watch!—"Not on any account!" I decided in my own mind, when I had run out of the drawing-room, and tucked my feet up on my bed, while my cheek burned and glowed from the blow it had received—and in my heart also the anguish of insult, and a thirst for vengeance flared up. . . . "Not on any account! I won't allow that damned seminarist to rail at me. . . . . He 'll put on the watch, and let the chain hang over his belly, and begin to neigh with pleasure. . . . Not on any account!"

Yet, what was I to do? How was I to prevent it?

I decided to steal the watch from my aunt!

VIII

Luckily Trankvillitátin was absent from town at the time. He could not come to our house earlier than the following day; I must take advantage of the night. My aunt did not lock herself into her room, for all through our house none of the keys worked in the locks; but where would she put the watch, where would she hide it? Until evening she carried it in her pocket, and even pulled it out more than once and looked at it; but at night—where would it be at night? —Well, it was my business to find that out, I thought, brandishing my clenched fists.

I was all glowing with audacity and fright and joy at the approach of the longed-for crime; I kept constantly nodding my head; I contracted my brows in a frown, I whispered: "Just wait a bit!" I menaced some one or other, I was malignant, I was dangerous . . . . and I avoided Davíd!—No one, not even he, must have the slightest suspicion of that which I was preparing to perpetrate. . . .

"I will act alone—and alone I will be responsible!"

The day dragged slowly by . . . . then the evening . . . at last night came. I did nothing, I even tried not to stir: one thought had riveted itself in my head, like a nail. At dinner my

father, whose heart was, as I have said, benignant, and who had grown somewhat ashamed of his vehemence—one does not slap boys of sixteen on the face—my father tried to pet me; but I rejected his caresses, not out of rancour, but simply because I was afraid of relenting: it was necessary for me to preserve all the fervour of vengeance, all the hardened temper of irrevocable resolution!

I went to bed very early; but, as a matter of course, I did not go to sleep, and did not even close my eyes, but on the contrary opened them staringly wide—although I had drawn the coverlet over my head. I had not thought out beforehand how I should proceed; I had no plan of action; I was merely waiting until everything should quiet down at last in the house. I took but one precaution; I did not remove my stockings. My aunt's room was in the second story. It was necessary to pass through the dining-room and the anteroom, ascend the stairs, traverse a short, narrow corridor—and there . . . on the right, was the door! . . . . There was no need to take a candle-end or a lantern: in the corner of my aunt's room, in front of the glass case of holy pictures, twinkled a shrine-lamp which was never allowed to go out. I knew this. So I should be able to see! I continued to lie with staring eyes and wide-open, parched mouth; my blood hammered in my temples, my ears, my throat, my

back, my whole body! I waited . . . but as though some imp were making sport of me, time passed on . . . . and on, but silence was not established.

IX

Never, so it seemed to me, had Davíd fallen asleep so late. . . . Davíd, the taciturn Davíd, even entered into conversation with me! Never had people thumped, walked, and talked so long in the house! And what were they talking about? I thought. Had n't they talked their fill that morning? External sounds did not cease for a long time, either. Now a dog set up a shrill, persistent barking; now a drunken peasant began to bluster somewhere or other, and would not stop; now gates creaked; now a miserable little peasant-cart drove past on rickety wheels, drove and drove, and could not seem to get past! But *these* sounds did not irritate me; on the contrary, they pleased me, for some reason or other! They seemed to divert my attention.—But now, at last, apparently, everything had quieted down. Only the pendulum of our old clock ticked hoarsely and pompously in the dining-room, and one could hear the long, measured, and seemingly-difficult breathing of sleeping persons.

I prepare to rise . . . but lo! again something has hissed . . . . then suddenly there is a groan

. . . . something soft has fallen—and a whisper is wafted abroad, a whisper glides along the walls. . . .

Or, is there nothing of all this, and is it only my imagination teasing me?

Everything has grown dead still at last: the very core and pitchiness and dead of the night has come.—'T is time! Shivering all over in anticipation, I fling aside the coverlet, lower my feet to the floor, stand up. . . . One step, a second. . . I crawl stealthily on. The hollows of my feet seem to belong to some one else: they are heavy, they step weakly and uncertainly. Stay! What sound is that? Is some one sawing somewhere, or scraping . . . . or sighing? I listen . . . Chills course over my cheeks, cold, watery tears well up in my eyes. . . . Never mind! . . . . Again I crawl forward. It is dark; but I know the way. Suddenly I collide with a chair. . . . What a clatter, and how painful! The blow has taken me straight on the shin. . . . I become petrified on the spot. . . . Well, will they wake up? Ah! I care nothing! Suddenly daring appears, and even wrath. Forward! Forward! And now I have traversed the dining-room; now I have groped for and found the door, and have opened it with one turn, with a flourish. . . . How that cursed hinge squeaks . . . . damn it! Now I am ascending the stairs. . . . One! two! three! A stair has creaked under my foot; I dart

a vicious glance at it—just as though I could see it. And I have grasped the handle of the second door. . . . This one did not even squeak! It swung open lightly, as much as to say: "Pray, enter!" . . . And now I am already in the little corridor!

High up in the corridor, near the ceiling, is a little window. The faint nocturnal light barely sifts through the dark panes. And in that flickering light I behold, stretched out on a felt upon the floor, with both arms thrown over her head, our little runaway girl; she is sleeping soundly, breathing rapidly, and right at her very head is the fateful door. I step over the felt, across the girl. . . . Who opened that door for me. . . . I know not; but now I am in my aunt's room; there is the shrine-lamp in one corner, and the bed in another, and my aunt in cap and night-dress is on the bed, with her face turned toward me. She is sleeping, and does not stir; even her breath is not audible. The flame of the shrine-lamp flickers softly, agitated by the current of fresh air; and all over the room, and over my aunt's face, which resembles yellow wax, the shadows begin to waver. . . .

And there is the watch! Behind the bed, on the wall it hangs, on a small embroidered cushion. What luck, I think to myself! . . . I must not delay! But whose footsteps are those, soft and swift, behind my back? Akh, no! that is the

beating of my heart! . . . I advance one foot. . . . Heavens! Something round, fairly large, hits me below the knee . . . . once! and yet again! I am ready to shriek aloud, I am ready to fall to the floor with fright. . . . A striped cat, our household cat, is standing before me, with arched back and tail in air. Now he springs upon the bed—heavily—and softly turns himself about, and sits down, without purring, like a judge; sits there and glares at me with his golden pupils! "Puss! puss!" I whisper, in barely audible tones. I bend across my aunt, I already have the watch in my grasp. . . . She suddenly sits up, opens her eyelids wide. . . . O my Creator! What will happen now? . . . . But her eyelids quiver and close, and with a faint babble her head falls back on the pillow.

Another minute and I am back in my own room, in my bed, with my watch in my hands. . . . More lightly than a tuft of down did I dash back! I am a gallant fellow, I am a thief, I am a hero; I am panting with joy, I feel burning hot, I feel jolly—I want to wake up Davíd on the spot and tell him everything—and, incredible to relate! I fall fast asleep, like one dead! At last I open my eyes. . . . The room is light; the sun has already risen. Fortunately, no one is awake as yet. I spring up like one scalded, arouse Davíd, and narrate all to him. He listens with a grin.

"See here,"—he says to me at last,—"let's

bury that idiotic watch in the earth, so that no trace of it may remain!"

I consider this a splendid idea. In a few minutes we are both dressed and run into the fruit-garden which is situated behind our house, and beneath an ancient apple-tree, in a deep hole hastily excavated, with Davíd's big knife, in the porous spring soil, we conceal forever the hated gift of my godfather, which after all has not reached the hands of the repulsive Trankvillitátin! We tread down the hole, fling rubbish over it, and, proud and happy, we regain the house without having been seen by any one, get into our beds and sleep another hour or two—and with what a light, blissful slumber!

X

You can picture to yourself what an uproar arose the next morning as soon as my aunt woke up and discovered the loss of the watch! Her piercing shriek still rings in my ears. "Police! Thieves! Thieves!" she shrilled, and roused the whole household on foot. She went into a wild rage, but Davíd and I only smiled to ourselves, and sweet was our smile to us.

"Every one must receive a sound thrashing, every one!"—screamed my aunt. "My watch has been stolen from under my head, from under my pillow!"

We were prepared for anything; we anticipated a catastrophe . . . but, contrary to our expectations, no catastrophe whatever crashed down upon our heads. At first, it is true, my father made a tremendous fuss—he even spoke of the police; but probably the row of the day before had thoroughly bored him, and he suddenly, to the indescribable amazement of my aunt, pounced not upon us, but upon her!

"I 'm sick of you,—more sick than of a bitter radish,—Pulkhériya Petróvna,"—he yelled, "and of your watch! I won't hear another word about it! You say that it did not disappear through sorcery; but what do I care about that? I don't care if it was sorcery! Has it been stolen from you? Well, let it go! What will Nastásyei Nastásyeitch say? The devil fly away with him altogether, with that Nastásyeitch of yours! I get nothing but offences and unpleasantnesses out of him. Don't dare to bother me any more! Do you hear?"

My father banged the door, and went off to his study.

At first Davíd and I did not understand the hint contained in his last words; but later on we learned that my father was extremely indignant at my godfather at that very time, because the latter had snatched away from him a good bit of business. And so my aunt was left in the lurch. She almost burst with wrath, but there

was nothing to be done. She was compelled to content herself with saying in a whisper as she passed me, making a wry face in my direction: "Thief, thief, convict, rascal!"—My aunt's reproaches afforded me genuine delight. It was also very pleasant, when skirting along the fence, to glide a feignedly-indifferent eye at the spot under the apple-tree where the watch reposed; and if Davíd were there also, to exchange with him a significant grimace. . . .

My aunt took it into her head to hound Trankvillitátin on me, but I had recourse to Davíd's assistance. He immediately announced to the stalwart seminarist that he would slit open his belly with a knife if he did not let me alone. . . . Trankvillitátin was scared. Although he was a grenadier and a cavalier, according to my aunt's expression, yet he was not distinguished for his valour.

Thus five weeks passed. . . . But do you think the story of the watch ended thus? No; it was not ended; only, in order to continue my tale, I must introduce a new personage; and in order to introduce this new personage, I must go back a little.

XI

My father had long been friendly, even intimate, with a certain retired official, Látkin, a lame, miserable little man with strange and timid ways—

one of those beings concerning whom the proverb was fabricated that they have been slain by God himself. Like my father and Nastásyei, he occupied himself with soliciting lawsuits and was also a private "lawyer" and attorney; but as he possessed neither an imposing exterior nor the gift of words, and had too little confidence in himself, he could not make up his mind to act independently, and stuck close to my father. His chirography was "a regular string of pearls," he was thoroughly grounded in the statutes and had acquired to perfection all the intricacies of style required for legal documents and petitions. In company with my father he managed certain affairs, shared the profit and loss, and, apparently, nothing could shake their friendship; but, nevertheless, it crumbled to ruin in one day—and forever. My father quarrelled for good and all with his colleague. If Látkin had snatched away from my father some profitable business after the manner of Nastásyei, who replaced him later on, my father would have been no more angry with him than with Nastásyei,—probably he would have been even less angry; but Látkin, under the influence of some inexplicable, incomprehensible feeling—envy or greed—and perhaps also under the momentary inspiration of honour,—"gave away" my father, betrayed him to their common client, a wealthy young merchant, by opening the eyes of that heedless youth to certain . . . .

certain tricks which were designed to yield my father considerable profit. It was not the monetary loss, great as that was—no! but the treachery which hurt and enraged my father. He could not forgive slyness!

"Just see, a saint has made his appearance!"—he reiterated, all trembling with wrath, and with teeth chattering as though in a fever. I was present in the room and was a witness of this outrageous scene.—"Good! From this day forth—amen! All is at an end between us. Yonder is God and yonder is the threshold—begone! I shall not set my foot in thy house, and do not thou set thy foot in mine! Thou 'rt too awfully honest for me—how can thou and I do business together! But thou shalt have neither bottom nor cover!" [1]

In vain did Látkin beseech my father, and bow to the earth before him; in vain did he strive to explain that which filled his own soul with painful surprise.

"But it was utterly without profit for myself, Porfíry Petróvitch," he stammered: "I cut my own throat, you know!"

My father remained inflexible . . . . Látkin never set foot in our house again. Fate itself, apparently, conceived a desire to put into execution my father's last, cruel wish. Soon after the rupture (it took place a couple of years before the beginning of my story) Látkin's wife—who

[1] Neither floor nor roof.—TRANSLATOR.

had long been ill, it is true—died; his second daughter, a child of three years, was stricken deaf and dumb with terror in one day: a swarm of bees settled down on her head; Látkin himself suffered a stroke of apoplexy, and fell into extreme and definitive poverty. How he got along, on what he subsisted, it was difficult even to imagine. He dwelt in a half-ruined little hut, at a short distance from our house. Raísa also lived with him, and did her best with the housekeeping. This Raísa is the new personage whom I must introduce into my story.

XII

So long as her father and mine were friends, we saw her constantly; she sometimes sat for whole days together at our house and either sewed or spun with her delicate, nimble and skilful hands. She was a graceful, rather thin young girl, with intelligent brown eyes in a white, rather long face. She spoke little, but to the point, in a quiet, resonant voice, hardly opening her mouth, and without displaying her teeth; when she laughed—which rarely happened, and did not last long—they suddenly all revealed themselves, large, white as almonds. I remember also her walk, which was light and elastic, with a little skip at every step; it always seemed to me as though she were descending a flight of stairs, even when she was

walking on level ground. She held herself upright, with arms pressed close to her breast. And whatever she did, whatever she undertook,—whether she threaded a needle, or smoothed a petticoat with an iron,—she did everything well, and . . . you will not believe it . . . in a touching sort of way. Her Christian name was Raísa, but we called her "Black-lip": she had on her upper lip a birth-mark,—a small, dark-blue spot, as though she had been eating blackberries. But this did not deface her: quite the contrary. She was just one year older than Davíd. I cherished for her a sentiment akin to reverence, but she had little to do with me. On the other hand, between Davíd and her a great friendship sprang up—a strange, unchildish, but good friendship. They seemed to suit each other. They sometimes did not exchange a word for whole hours at a stretch, but each felt that things were well with them—and that because they were together. I have never met any other girl like her, really. There was in her something attentive and decisive, something honourable and sad and charming. I never heard her utter a clever word, but, on the other hand, I never heard a commonplace from her, and more intelligent eyes I have never seen. When the rupture occurred between her family and mine I began to see her rarely: my father forbade me, in the strictest manner, to visit the Látkins—and she no longer showed herself in our house. But I was

in the habit of meeting her on the street, and in church, and Black-lip still inspired me with the same sentiments: respect and even a certain admiration rather than compassion. She had borne her reverses well. "She's a girl of flint," the coarse Trankvillitátin himself had said of her one day. And really she was to be pitied: her face had assumed a careworn, suffering expression, her eyes had become hollow and sunken—an intolerable burden was imposed upon her young shoulders.

Davíd saw her much more frequently than I did; he even went to their house. My father allowed him to do as he pleased; he knew that Davíd would not obey him in any case. And Raísa presented herself at the wattled fence of our garden, from time to time, where it abutted on the alley, and there met Davíd; she did not conduct a conversation with him, but merely communicated to him some fresh difficulty or new disaster, and asked his advice.

The paralysis which had smitten Látkin was of a very peculiar nature. His arms and legs had grown weak, but he had not lost the use of them, and his brain even worked regularly; but, on the other hand, his tongue got entangled and instead of one set of words he employed quite another set; one was forced to guess at what he meant to say.

. . . "Tchu-tchu-tchu," he stammered with an effort (he began every sentence with "tchu-tchu-tchu")—"the scissors; give me the scissors . . . ."

But by the scissors he meant to indicate bread. He hated my father with all the strength that was left to him; he attributed to his curse all his misfortunes and called him sometimes a butcher, sometimes a jeweller. "Tchu-tchu, don't dare to go to the jeweller's, Vasílievna!" He had rechristened his daughter by this name, while his own name was Martinyán.[1] He grew more exacting every day; his wants increased. . . . And how were those wants to be supplied? Where was the money to come from? Woe ages a person fast; but it makes one shudder to hear certain words on the lips of a girl of seventeen.

XIII

I REMEMBER that I happened to be present at her conversation by the fence with Davíd, on the very day of her mother's death.

"Mamma died at dawn this morning," she said, after first having glanced about her with her dark, expressive eyes, and then fixed them on the ground. "The cook has undertaken to buy the coffin as cheaply as possible; and we cannot rely upon her; she will probably spend the money for liquor. It would be well for thee to come round and take a look, Davíd: she is afraid of thee."

[1] Consequently, his daughter should have been called Raísa Martinyánovna.—TRANSLATOR.

"I'll come," replied Davíd; "I'll see to it. . . . But how about thy father?"

"He is weeping; he says, 'You will be spoiling me, too.' 'You will spoil' must mean—you will bury. Now he has fallen asleep." Raísa suddenly heaved a deep sigh.—"Akh, Davíd, Davídushko!"[1] She passed her half-clenched fist across her forehead and brows, and this gesture was very bitter . . . and very sincere and beautiful, as were all her gestures.

"But do have some pity on thyself," remarked Davíd.—"Thou hast not slept at all, I am sure. . . . And what is the use of crying? It will not remedy thy grief."

"I have no time to weep," replied Raísa.

"Rich folks can indulge themselves in that way, in weeping," remarked Davíd.

Raísa started to go, but turned back.

"They are bargaining with us for the yellow shawl from mamma's wedding outfit. They offer twelve rubles. I think that is very little."

"So it is,—very little."

"I would prefer not to sell it," went on Raísa, after a brief pause,—"but we must have money for the funeral, you know."

"You must. Only you must not spend money at random. Those priests are—the mischief! Here, wait a bit, I'll come round. Art thou going? —I'll be there very soon. Good-bye, dear."

[1] Or "dear little David."—TRANSLATOR.

"Good-bye, dear brother, darling!"

"See here now, don't cry!"

"How should I cry? I must either cook the dinner or cry. One of the two."

"What does she mean by cooking the dinner?" I asked, turning to Davíd, as soon as Raísa had departed. "Do you mean to say that she prepares the food herself?"

"Why, surely thou didst hear her say that the cook has gone to bargain."

"Prepare the dinner," I thought, "and her hands have always been so clean, and her gown so neat. . . . I should like to see how she would manage in the kitchen. . . . A remarkable girl!"

I remember another conversation at the fence. On this occasion Raísa had brought with her her little deaf and dumb sister. This sister was a pretty child, with huge, surprised eyes, and a whole mass of dull black hair on her little head. (Raísa's hair also was black, and without lustre.) Látkin had already been smitten with paralysis.

"I really do not know what I am to do," began Raísa.—"The doctor has written a prescription, and I must go to the apothecary's; and our wretched little peasant" (Látkin still owned one serf soul) "has brought fuel and a goose from the village. But the yard-porter is taking it away; 'you are in debt to me,' he says."

"Is he taking away the goose?" asked Davíd.

"No, not the goose. 'It's old,' he says; ''t is

good for nothing any more. That 's why the peasant has brought it to you,' he says. But he is taking the wood."

"But he has no right to do that!" exclaimed Davíd.

"He has no right, but he is taking it. . . . I went to the garret; we have a trunk standing there—an old, a very old trunk. I began to rummage in it. . . And what do you think I found? Look!"

She drew from under her kerchief a fairly large telescope, mounted in brass, and covered with morocco which had turned yellow. Davíd, in his quality of a lover and connoisseur of all sorts of instruments, immediately seized it.

"English," he said, applying it to one eye, then to the other.—"A naval glass."

"And the lens is whole," pursued Raísa.—"I showed it to papa; he said, 'Carry it to the jeweller and pawn it!' What dost thou think about it? Will they give me money for it? For of what use to us is a telescope? Can we use it as a looking-glass to see what beauties we are? But we have no looking-glass, unfortunately."

And as she uttered these words, Raísa suddenly burst into a loud laugh. Her little sister could not hear her, of course, but probably felt the quivering of her body (she was holding Raísa by the hand), and lifting her large eyes, she contorted

her little face in a frightened way, and burst into tears.

"That 's the way she always is," remarked Raísa; "she does not like to have people laugh."

"Come, I won't do it again, Liúbotchka, I won't do it again," she added, promptly squatting down on her heels beside the child and running her fingers through her hair. The child ceased crying. Raísa rose to her feet.

"So pray do thy best, Davídushko . . . with the telescope, I mean. For 't is a pity about the wood,—and the goose also, no matter how old it is!"

"I can certainly get ten rubles for it," said Davíd, turning the glass about in all directions. —"I 'll buy it from thee . . . why not? And in the meantime, here are fifteen kopéks for the apothecary. . . . Is that enough?"

"I will borrow it of thee," whispered Raísa, accepting the coin from him.

"Of course! With interest—wouldst like that? Yes, and I have a pledge. A very valuable article! . . . The English are first-class people."

"But they say that we are going to war with them?"

"No," replied Davíd, "we are thrashing the French at present."

"Well—thou knowest best. So do thy best. Farewell, gentlemen!"

XIV

And here is another conversation which also took place at that same fence. Raísa appeared more anxious than usual.

"A head of cabbage costs five kopéks, and the head is such a wee, tiny bit of a thing," she said, propping her chin on her hand.—"Just think how dear! And I have n't yet received the money for my sewing."

"Is some one in debt to thee?" asked Davíd.

"Why, it is still that same merchant's wife who lives beyond the ramparts."

"The one who wears a green coat,[1] the fat one?"

"Yes, she 's the one."

"What a fat creature! She can't get her breath for fat, and in church throws off a steam, but does n't pay her debts!"

"She will pay . . . . only when will it be? And here is something else, Davídushko, some fresh worries. My father has taken it into his head to narrate his dreams to me—thou knowest how tongue-tied he has become: he tries to say one word and another comes out instead. When it is a question of food, or of anything connected

[1] The coat in question is of plebeian shape, in use among the peasants. It has sleeves, short skirts, a round turn-down collar, and is trimmed all round with a ribbon border. It is fitted to the figure and hooked up.—Translator.

with daily life, we have already become used to him, we can understand; but a dream is unintelligible even with healthy people, while in his case it is dreadful! 'I 'm greatly delighted,' he says; 'to-day I was walking about the whole time on white birds; and the Lord God gave me a pouquet, and in the pouquet sat Andriúsha with a little knife.'—He calls our Liúbotchka Andriúsha.—'Now we are both going to get well,' he says. 'All that is needed is to use the knife—tchirk! Like that!' and he points to his throat. —I don't understand him. I say: 'Very well, dear, very well'; but he gets angry and tries to explain the matter to me. He even took to weeping."

"But thou shouldst have told him some tale or other," I interposed: "thou shouldst have invented some lie or other."

"I don't know how to lie," replied Raísa, fairly flinging her hands apart in despair.

And it was a fact; she did not know how to lie.

"It is not necessary to lie," remarked Davíd, "and there is no need for wearing thyself to death either. No one will say 'Thank you,' I 'm sure."

Raísa looked intently at him.

"I wanted to ask something of thee, Davídushko; how should one write *'shtop'?*"

"What does *'shtop'* mean?"

"Why, here, for example: 'I wish that thou shouldst live.'"

"Write: sh, t, o, b, er!"[1]

"No," I put in: "not sh, but tch!"

"Well, never mind, write tch! But the chief point is that thou shouldst take care of thyself!"

"I should like to write correctly," remarked Raísa, blushing faintly.

When she blushed she immediately became wonderfully pretty.

"It may prove useful. . . . How papa used to write in his day! . . . It was wonderful! And he taught me. Well, but now he deciphers the letters badly."

"Only let me keep thee alive," repeated Davíd, lowering his voice and never taking his eyes from Raísa. Raísa darted a swift glance at him and blushed worse than before.—"Only do thou live. . . . . And as for writing . . . write as best thou canst. . . Oh, damn it, the witch is coming!" (Davíd called my aunt "the witch.") "And what is bringing her hither? . . . Run away, my darling!"

Raísa darted one more glance at Davíd and fled.

Davíd spoke to me very rarely and reluctantly about Raísa and her family, especially since he

[1] *Er* is the name of the character denoting that the preceding consonant has the hard, not the soft, pronunciation. All terminal consonants, and many which are not terminal, have one or other of two characters affixed, and it is necessary to specify which is required. *Tchtob* (or, in full, *tchtoby*) means *that*, or *in order that*.—TRANSLATOR.

had begun to look for his father's return. He thought of nothing but him, and of how they would live together afterward. He had a vivid recollection of him, and was wont to describe him to me with particular satisfaction.

"He is tall and strong: he can lift ten puds [1] with one hand. . . . When he shouts 'Hey there, young fellow!'—it can be heard throughout the house. He's such a splendid, kind man . . . . and a gallant fellow! He never quailed before any one. We lived in capital style until we were ruined! They say his hair has grown quite grey now, but formerly it was as red as mine. He's a ve-ry stro-ong man!"

Davíd absolutely refused to admit that we should remain in Ryazán.

"You may go away," I remarked, "but I shall remain."

"Nonsense! We will take thee with us."

"And how about my father?"

"Thou wilt abandon thy father. And if thou dost not—thou wilt go to destruction."

"What dost thou mean by that?"

Davíd did not answer me, and merely contracted his white brows.

"So then, when we go away with my daddy," he began again, "he will find thee a good place, and I shall marry. . . ."

[1] A *pud* is 36 pounds English.—Translator.

"Well, there 's no great haste about that," I remarked.

"Yes, there is. Why not? I shall marry soon."

"Thou?"

"Yes, I. Why?"

"Surely thou hast not thine eye on a bride already?"

"Of course I have."

"Who is she?"

Davíd laughed.

"What a stupid thou art! Raísa, of course."

"Raísa!" I repeated, with amazement.—"Art thou jesting?"

"I don't know how to jest, my dear fellow, and I don't like it either."

"Why, she is a year older than thou."

"What of that? However, let us drop the subject."

"Permit me to ask one question," I said.—"Does she know that thou art preparing to marry her?"

"Probably."

"But hast not thou revealed anything to her?"

"What is there to reveal? When the time comes, I shall tell her. Come, enough of this!"

Davíd rose and left the room. When I was alone I thought . . . and thought . . . and finally came to the conclusion that Davíd was behaving like a sensible and practical man; and I

even felt flattered at being the friend of such a practical man!

And Raísa, in her everlasting black woollen gown, suddenly began to appear charming and worthy of the most devoted love!

XV

Davíd's father still did not arrive and did not even send letters. Summer had long since come, the month of June was drawing to a close. We were worn out with anticipation.

In the meantime rumours began to circulate to the effect that Látkin had suddenly grown much worse, and the first any one knew, his family would die of hunger, if the house did not tumble down and crush them all under the roof. Davíd even changed countenance and became so vicious and surly that one dared not speak to him. I did not meet Raísa at all. Now and then she flitted past at a distance, tripping briskly across the street with her beautiful light gait, straight as an arrow, with folded arms, a dark and intelligent look under her long eyebrows, and a careworn expression on her pale, sweet face—that was all.

My aunt, with the assistance of her Trankvillitátin, tormented me as of old, and as of old she kept whispering reproachfully in my very ear: "Thief, sir, thief!" But I paid no attention to her; and my father continued to bustle, work

sedulously, run about and write, and would not listen to anything.

One day, as I was walking past the familiar apple-tree, I cast a sidelong glance at the well-known spot, more as a matter of habit than anything else, and suddenly it struck me that a certain change had taken place in the surface of the ground which covered our hoard. . . . A sort of hump had made its appearance where there had previously been a depression, and bits of the rubbish were lying in a different position! "What's the meaning of this?" I thought to myself. "Is it possible that some one has penetrated our secret and has dug up the watch?"

I must convince myself with my own eyes. I felt the most complete indifference, of course, toward the watch rusting there in the bowels of the earth; but no other person could be permitted to make use of it! Accordingly, on the following day I rose before dawn once more, and arming myself with a knife, I wended my way to the garden, hunted up the marked spot beneath the apple-tree, set to digging, and after digging a hole about two feet deep, I was forced to the conviction that the watch had disappeared; that some one had got at it, taken it out, stolen it!

But who could have . . . taken it out—except David?

What other person knew where it was?

I filled up the hole, and returned to the house. I felt myself deeply injured.

"Assuming," I thought, "that Davíd had need of the watch in order to save his future wife or her father from starving to death. . . . Say what you will, the watch was worth something. . . . Still, why did not he come to me and say: 'Brother!' (in Davíd's place I would have infallibly said brother), 'brother! I am in need of money; thou hast none, I know, but permit me to make use of that watch which we buried together under the old apple-tree. It is doing no one any good, and I shall be so grateful to thee, brother!' With what joy I should have given my consent! But to act secretly, in a treacherous manner, not to trust his friend. . . . No! No passion, no need could excuse that!"

I repeat that I was deeply wounded. I began to display coldness, to sulk. . . .

But Davíd was not one of those who notice such things and are worried thereby.

I began to drop hints. . . .

But Davíd did not seem to understand my hints in the least.

I said in his presence how low in my eyes was the man who, having a friend and understanding the full significance of that sacred sentiment, friendship, did not possess, nevertheless, sufficient magnanimity to avoid having recourse to cunning; as though anything could be concealed!

As I uttered these last words I laughed scornfully.

But Davíd never turned a hair!

At last I asked him outright, whether he supposed our watch had continued to go for a while after it was buried in the earth, or had stopped immediately.

He answered me—"The deuce knows! Well, thou hast found a fine thing to meditate about!"

I did not know what to think. Davíd, evidently, had something on his heart . . . . only it was not the theft of the watch. An unforeseen incident demonstrated to me his innocence.

XVI

One day I was returning home through a cross-alley which I generally avoided using, because in it there was a detached house where my enemy Trankvillitátin lodged; but on this occasion Fate led me thither. As I was passing under the closed window of a drinking-establishment I suddenly heard the voice of our servant Vasíly, a free and easy young fellow, a great "dawdler and idler" as my father expressed it,—but also a great conqueror of feminine hearts, on which he acted by means of witty remarks, dancing and playing on the tórban.[1]

"And what do you think they hit upon?" said

[1] A sort of bagpipes.—Translator.

Vasíly, whom I could not see, although I could hear him very distinctly; he was probably sitting just there, close to the window, with a comrade, over a cup of tea, and, as often happens with people in a closed room, was talking loudly, without a suspicion that any passer-by in the street could hear every word:—"What do you think they hit upon? They buried it in the earth!"

"Thou liest!"—growled another voice.

"They did, I tell thee. We have such raymarkible young gentlemen at our house. That Davíd in particular . . . . he 's a regular Æsop. I get up just at break of day, and step to the window, so . . . I look out—and what do I see? . . . Our two nice little dears are walking in the garden carrying that same watch, and they dug a hole under the apple-tree—and in they put it, just as though it had been a baby! And then they smoothed over the earth, by heaven, those good-for-nothings!"

"Akh, the deuce take them!"—said Vasíly's companion.—"Too much good living, of course. Well, and what then? Didst thou dig up the watch?"

"Certainly I did. I have it now. Only I can't display it at present. There was altogether too much of a row over it. That Davíd pulled it out from under the spine of our old woman that very night."

"O—Oh!"

"He did, I tell thee. Quite unpardonable. And so I can't show it. But wait until some officers come: I 'll sell it to some one, or gamble it away at cards."

I listened no longer, but rushed headlong home and straight to Davíd.

"Brother!" I began,—"brother! Forgive me! I have been guilty toward thee! I have suspected thee! I have accused thee! Thou seest how excited I am! Forgive me!"

"What 's the matter with thee?" asked Davíd. —"Explain thyself."

"I suspected thee of having dug up our watch from under the apple-tree!"

"That watch again! Why, is n't it there?"

"No, it is not; I thought that thou hadst taken it, in order to aid thy friends. And it was all that Vasíly!"

I told Davíd all I had heard under the window of the dram-shop.

But how shall I describe my amazement? I had assumed, as a matter of course, that Davíd would be indignant; but I could not possibly have foreseen what would happen to him! Barely had I finished my tale when he flew into an indescribable rage! Davíd, who had never borne himself otherwise than with scorn toward this whole "petty" caper with the watch, as he termed it,—that same Davíd who had more than once declared that it was not worth an empty egg-shell,—sud-

denly sprang from his seat, flushed crimson all over, set his teeth and clenched his fists.

"Things cannot be left in this state!" he said at last.—"How dares he appropriate other people's property? Just wait, I'll teach him a lesson! I won't connive at thievery!"

I must confess that to this day I do not understand what could have so enraged Davíd; whether it was that he was already irritated and Vasíly's behaviour merely poured oil on the fire, or whether my suspicions had wounded him, I cannot say; but I had never seen him so excited. With gaping mouth I stood before him, and simply wondered how he could breathe so heavily and forcibly.

"What dost thou intend to do?" I asked at last.

"Thou shalt see—after dinner, when thy father lies down for his nap. I'll hunt up that wag! I'll have a little talk with him!"

"Well," I thought to myself, "I would n't like to be in that 'wag's' place! What will come of this, O Lord, my God?"

XVII

This is what came of it.

Just as soon after dinner as there reigned that slumberous suffocating tranquillity which to this day is spread like a hot bed of down over the Rus-

sian house and the Russian people in the middle of the day after savoury viands have been partaken of, Davíd (I followed on his heels with a sinking heart)—Davíd wended his way to the servants' hall and called Vasíly out. At first the latter was unwilling to come, but ended by obeying and following him into the little garden.

Davíd stood before him, almost touching his breast. Vasíly was a whole head taller than he.

"Vasíly Teréntieff!" began my comrade in a firm voice, "six weeks ago thou didst dig up from under this apple-tree the watch which we had concealed there. Thou hadst no right to do that; the watch did not belong to thee. Give it here this very minute!"

Vasíly came near losing countenance, but immediately recovered himself. "What watch? What are you talking about? I don't know anything about it! I haven't any watch at all!"

"I know what I am saying, and don't lie, thou. Thou hast the watch. Hand it over!"

"I haven't got your watch."

"Then why didst thou say in the public-house . . ." I began; but Davíd stopped me.

"Vasíly Teréntieff,"—he articulated in a dull and threatening voice,—"we are authentically informed that thou hast the watch. I tell thee, as a favour, to hand it over.—And if thou dost not . . . ."

Vasíly grinned insolently.

"And what will you do to me then? Come, sir!"

"What?—Both of us will fight with thee until thou conquerest us or we conquer thee."

Vasíly burst out laughing.

"Fight?—That's no business for young gentlemen! Fight with a serf?"

Davíd suddenly seized Vasíly by the waistcoat.

"But we aren't going to fight thee with our fists," he ejaculated, gnashing his teeth,—"understand that! But I will give thee a knife and will take one myself . . . . Well, and then we'll see who's who! Alexyéi!"—he said to me imperiously,—"run for my big knife; thou knowest which—the one with the bone haft; it is lying yonder on the table; and I have another in my pocket."

Vasíly suddenly came near falling in a swoon. Davíd still held him fast by the waistcoat.

"Mercy . . . . have mercy, Davíd Egóritch!" —he stammered; tears even started to his eyes. "What are you doing? What are you doing? Let me go!"

"I won't let thee go.—And I won't spare thee! If thou eludest us to-day we will begin again to-morrow.—Alyósha! where's that knife?"

"Davíd Egóritch!" roared Vasíly, "do not commit murder. . . . Who ever saw the like of this? And the watch . . . . I really did . . . . I was joking. I'll fetch it to you this very min-

ute. How can you go on like that? First you threaten to rip up Khrisánfa Lúkitch's belly, and now you threaten me!—Let me go, David Egóritch. . . . Please to receive your watch. Only don't tell your papa."

Davíd released Vasíly's waistcoat. I looked into his face; really, it was enough to scare a bolder person than Vasíly. It was so dismal . . . and cold . . . and malignant. . . .

Vasíly darted into the house and immediately returned thence with the watch in his hand.—Silently he handed it to Davíd, and only as he was on his way back to the house did he exclaim aloud on the threshold: "Phew, here's a pretty go!"

His face was still distorted beyond recognition. Davíd nodded his head and went off to our room. Again I trudged after him.

"Suvóroff! A regular Suvóroff!" I thought to myself.—At that time, in 1801, Suvóroff was our leading popular hero.

XVIII

Davíd locked the door behind him, laid the watch on the table, folded his arms and—oh, marvellous to relate!—burst out laughing.—As I looked at him I began to laugh also.

"What an astounding dodger!" he began.—"We cannot possibly rid ourselves of this watch.

It is bewitched, it really is. And what made me go into a rage so all of a sudden?"

"Yes, what?" I repeated.—"Thou mightest have left it with Vasíly . . . ."

"Well, no," interrupted Davíd.—"That 's all fiddlesticks! But what shall we do with it now?"

"Yes! What?"

We both riveted our eyes on the watch, and fell to thinking. Adorned with a string of sky-blue glass beads (the ill-starred Vasíly in his headlong haste had not had time to detach this string, which belonged to him), it was very quietly performing its functions; it ticked somewhat unevenly, it is true, and moved its brass minute-hand slowly.

"Shall we bury it again? Or fling it into the stove?" I suggested at last.—"Or, see here,—why not make a present of it to Látkin?"

"No," replied Davíd.—"That won't do at all. But here 's an idea: a commission has been instituted in the Governor's chancellery to receive subscriptions for the benefit of the inhabitants of Kasímoff who have been burned out of house and home. They say that the town of Kasímoff has been reduced to ashes, with all its churches. And they say that everything is accepted; not alone bread and money, but articles of every description.—Let 's give the watch to them! Hey?"

"We will! We will!" I interposed.—"That 's a fine idea! But I assumed that as the family of thy friends is in need . . . ."

"No, no; give it to the commission!—The Látkins will get along without it.—To the commission with it!"

"Well, if it must be the commission, it must.—Only I suppose that we must write something to the Governor to go with it."

Davíd looked at me. "Dost think so?"

"Yes; of course it is not necessary to write much. But so—only a few words."

"For example?"

"For example . . . . we might begin thus: 'Being' . . . or, better still, 'Actuated' . . . ."

"'Actuated' is good. . . ."

"Then we must say: 'The which small mite of ours' . . . ."

"'Mite' . . . . is good also; well, take thy pen, sit down, write, go ahead!"

"I will first make a rough draft," I remarked.

"Well, do so; only write, write . . . . And in the meantime I will polish it up with some chalk."

I took a sheet of paper, and mended my pen; but before I had had time to set at the top of the page: "To His Excellency, Mr. Radiant Prince" (our Governor at that time was Prince X.), I stopped short, astounded by an unusual noise which had suddenly arisen in our house. Davíd also noticed the noise and also stopped short, with the watch held aloft in his left hand, and the rag smeared with chalk in his right. We exchanged glances. What was that piercing shriek? That

was aunty squealing. . . . And what was this? —It was the voice of my father, hoarse with rage.

"The watch! The watch!" roared some one, probably Trankvillitátin.

Feet trampled, soles squeaked, the whole horde was running . . . making straight for us. I was swooning with terror; and Davíd was as white as clay, but with the look of an eagle.

"That villain Vasíly has betrayed us," he whispered through his teeth. . . .

The door was flung wide open, and my father in his dressing-gown, and without a necktie, and my aunt in her dressing-sack, Trankvillitátin, Vasíly, Yúshka, another small boy, and the cook Agapít, all invaded the room.

"Scoundrels!" yelled my father, barely able to draw his breath . . . . "at last we have caught you!"—And espying the watch in Davíd's hands: —"Hand it over!"—roared my father.—"Hand over that watch!"

But Davíd, without uttering a word, darted to the open window, sprang through it into the yard, and then made for the street!

Accustomed to imitate my model in all things, I also jumped out, and rushed after Davíd. . . .

"Catch them! Hold them!" thundered a wild chorus of voices behind us.

But we were already fleeing headlong down the street, with no caps on our heads, Davíd in the lead, I a few paces behind him, and after us came the trampling and roar of pursuit.

XIX

MANY years have elapsed since all these events; I have thought of them many a time—and to this day I cannot understand the cause of that rage with which my father was seized, after having so recently forbidden the mere mention of that watch of which he was so tired, just as I could not understand then the wrath of Davíd when he learned of its theft by Vasíly.—But I cannot help thinking that some mysterious force was contained within it. Vasíly had not betrayed us, as Davíd supposed,—he was in no mood for that; he was too thoroughly intimidated; but simply, one of our maids had seen the watch in his hands and had immediately reported the fact to my aunt. And thus the spark had kindled a great fire.

So then, we dashed headlong down the street, along its very centre. The passers-by who met us came to a halt or stepped aside in perplexity. I remember that one retired Second-Major, a famous breeder of greyhounds, suddenly thrust his head out of the window of his lodgings, and, all red in the face, with his body hanging in the balance, began to emit a wild view-halloo!

"Stop! Hold them!" continued to thunder after us.—Davíd ran onward, swinging the watch round his head, and now and then giving a skip; I skipped also, and at the same places as he.

"Whither away?" I shout to Davíd, perceiving

that he is turning from the street into an alley, and making the turn with him.

"To the Oká!"—he shouts back.—"Into the water, into the river, to the devil with it!"

"Halt! Halt!" roar the people behind us. . . .

But we are already flying through the alley. And now a chill breath wafts to meet us, and the river is before us, and the steep, muddy descent, and the wooden bridge with a train of wagons extending across it, and the soldier with his pike by the barrier—soldiers carried pikes in those days . . . . Davíd is already on the bridge, he dashes past the soldier, who tries to prod him in the leg with his pike,—and collides with a passing calf.—Davíd instantly leaps upon the railing, —he emits a joyful exclamation. . . . Something white, something blue has glittered, has flashed through the air—it is the silver watch with Vasíly's chain flying into the water. . . . But at this point something incredible occurs! Davíd's legs whirl upward in pursuit of the watch and he himself, head down, hands in front of him, jacket-tails fluttering in the air, describes a sharp curve —frightened frogs leap thus on a hot day from the lofty shore into the waters of a pond—and instantly disappears beyond the railing of the bridge . . . . and then—flop! and a heavy splash below. . . .

What my sensations were it is utterly beyond my power to describe. I was a few paces distant

from Davíd when he sprang from the railing .... but I do not even recollect whether I screamed; I do not think I was even frightened: I was struck dumb and dizzy. My arms and legs lost their power. Around me people were jostling and running; some of them seemed familiar to me; Trofímitch suddenly flitted past, the soldier with the pike darted off somewhere to one side, the horses of the wagon-train walked hurriedly past, tossing on high their muzzles, which were bound together. . . . Then there was a ringing in my ears, and some one gave me a smart blow in the nape of the neck and along the whole length of my spine. . . . I had fallen down in a swoon.

I remember that I rose to my feet afterward, and, perceiving that no one was paying any heed to me, I approached the railing, not on the side from which Davíd had jumped (it seemed to me a dreadful thing to approach that one)—but the other, and began to stare at the river, turbulent, blue, and swollen; I remember that not far from the bridge, on the shore, I noticed a boat moored, and in the boat several men, and one of them, all wet and glistening in the sun, bending over the edge of the boat, was dragging something from the water—something not very big, some long, dark thing which at first I took for a trunk or a basket; but on looking more intently I saw that that thing was—Davíd! Then I gave a great start, began to shout at the top of my voice, and

ran to the boat, pushing my way through the crowd; and having reached it, I became daunted and began to look about me. Among the people who surrounded it I recognised Trankvillitátin, our cook Agapít with a boot on his arm, Yúshka and Vasíly. . . . The wet, glistening man had pulled from under the boat by his armpits the body of Davíd, whose hands were raised on a level with his face, as though he were desirous of hiding it from the eyes of strangers, and had laid him on his back upon the muddy shore. Davíd did not stir; he seemed to have stretched himself out, drawn in his heels, and thrust out his belly. His face was of a greenish hue, his eyes were rolled up, and the water was dripping from his hair. The wet man who had pulled him out, a factory-hand, judging from his attire, began to narrate, shivering with cold the while and incessantly pushing the hair back from his brow, how he had done it. He narrated very decorously and carefully.

"What do I see, gentlemen? This young fellow diving from the bridge. . . . Well! . . . . I immediately run down-stream, for I know that he has fallen straight into the current, which will carry him under the bridge—well, and then . . . . that would be the last of him! I look: something resembling a shaggy cap is floating, but it was his head. Well, and so I immediately dashed into the water in a lively manner. I clutched

him. . . . Well, and there was no great art in that!"

Two or three words of approbation made themselves audible among the crowd.

"We must warm thee up now. Come along, let's sip a cup of liquor," remarked some one.

But here some one suddenly made his way convulsively to the front. . . . It was Vasíly.

"What are ye about, ye Orthodox?"—he cried tearfully.—"We must roll him. This is our young gentleman!"

"Roll him, roll him!" resounded through the crowd, which was constantly increasing.

"Hang him up by his feet! That's the best remedy!"

"Put him belly down over a barrel, and roll him back and forth, until . . . . Take him up, my lads!"

"Don't you dare to touch him!"—interposed the soldier with the pike.—"He must be taken to the guard-house."

"Rabble!"—Trofímitch's bass voice was wafted from somewhere or other.

"Why, he is alive!" I suddenly cry at the top of my lungs, almost in affright. I had been on the point of putting my face against his face. . . . "So *that* is what drowned people are like," I was thinking to myself, as my heart died within me . . . . when suddenly I saw Davíd's lips tremble, and a little water flow from them. . . .

I was instantly thrust aside, dragged away; all darted toward him.

"Roll him, roll him!"—voices began to be uplifted.

"No, no, stop!" shouted Vasíly.—"Take him home . . . home!"

"Take him home,"—chimed in Trankvillitátin himself.

"We'll hurry him thither in a jiffy—we shall be able to see better there," went on Vasíly. . . . (I took a great liking to Vasíly, beginning with that day.)—"Brothers! Isn't there a bast-mat handy? If not, lift him by his head and his heels. . . ."

"Stay! Here's a bast-mat! Lay him on it! Catch hold! March! Slowly: as though he were riding in a coach of state!"

And a few moments later Davíd, borne on the bast-mat, triumphantly made his entrance under our roof.

XX

They undressed him and placed him on the bed. Already in the street he had begun to show signs of life, he had bellowed and waved his hands. . . . In the room he recovered his senses completely. But as soon as fears for his life were past, and there was no necessity for fussing over him, wrath

asserted its rights: all retreated from him as though he had been a leper.

"May God punish him! May God punish him!"—squealed my aunt so that she could be heard all over the house.—"Send him off somewhere, Porfíry Petróvitch, or he will perpetrate some other crime which cannot be endured!"

"I think this must be some sort of an asp, and a mad one at that,"—chimed in Trankvillitátin.

"What malice, what malice!"—shrilled my aunt, coming to the very door of our room so as to make sure that Davíd heard her. "First he stole the watch, and then he flung it into the water. . . . As much as to say, 'Nobody shall have it.' . . . So he did!"

Everybody, positively everybody, was angry!

"Davíd," I asked him as soon as we were left alone, "why didst thou do that?"

"There thou goest too,"—he retorted, still in a very weak voice; his lips were blue, and he seemed bloated all over.—"What have I done?"

"But why didst thou leap into the water?"

"Why did I leap?—I could n't keep my balance on the railing, and that 's all there is to it. If I had known how to swim I would have leaped deliberately. I shall certainly learn. But, on the other hand, that watch is now done for! . . ."

At this point my father entered our room with solemn tread.

"I shall flog thee, without fail, my dear fel-

low," he said, addressing me; "have no doubt as to that, although thou art too old to lay across a bench any longer."—Then he stepped up to the bed on which Davíd was lying.—"In Siberia,"—he began in a pompous and impressive tone,—"in Siberia, my good sir, in penal servitude, men live and die underground who are less guilty, less criminally guilty than thou! Art thou a suicide, or simply a fool?—Tell me that one thing, pray!"

"I am not a suicide nor a thief," replied Davíd, "but the truth is the truth: good people get sent to Siberia, better men than you and I. . . . . Who should know that if not you?"

My father uttered a low cry, retreated a pace, stared intently at Davíd, spat, and slowly crossing himself, left the room.

"Dost thou not like it?" Davíd called after him, thrusting out his tongue. Then he tried to rise, but could not.—"Evidently, I have injured myself somehow," he said, groaning and wrinkling up his forehead.—"I remember that I was dashed against a beam by the water. . . .

"Didst thou see Raísa?" he suddenly added.

"No, I did not see her. . . . Wait! Wait! Wait! Now I remember: was n't it she who was standing on the shore near the bridge?—Yes. . . . A dark frock, a yellow kerchief on her head. . . . It must have been she!"

"Well, and afterward . . . . didst thou see her afterward?"

"Afterward . . . . I don't know. I was in no mood for observing.—Thou didst leap at that moment. . . ."

Davíd started up in alarm.

"My dear friend Alyósha, go to her this moment, tell her that I am well, that there is nothing the matter with me. I shall go to see them tomorrow. Go quickly, brother, do me that favour!"

Davíd stretched out both hands to me. . . . His dry, red hair stuck up in funny whorls . . . but the deeply-moved expression of his face seemed all the more genuine for that. I took my cap and left the house, endeavouring not to fall under the eye of my father and not to remind him of his promise.

XXI

"And, in fact," I argued with myself on my way to the Látkins', "how was it that I did not notice Raísa? What has become of her? For she must have seen . . . ."

And suddenly I remembered: at the very moment of Davíd's fall a terrible, heart-rending cry had rung in my ears. . . .

Was not that she? But how was it that I had not seen her afterward?

In front of the tiny house in which Látkin dwelt stretched a strip of waste land overgrown

with nettles and enclosed with a decrepit fence of wattled boughs. Hardly had I made my way across this fence (there was no gate or wicket anywhere), than the following spectacle presented itself to my eyes.—On the lowest step of the porch in front of the house Raísa was sitting with her elbows on her knees and her chin propped on her interlaced fingers; she was staring straight in front of her; by her side stood her deaf-and-dumb sister tranquilly flourishing a small whip, and in front of the porch, with his back toward me, clad in a tattered and threadbare dressing-gown, with under-drawers and felt boots on his legs, stood old Látkin, dangling his arms and writhing, shifting from foot to foot where he stood and indulging in little leaps. At the sound of my footsteps he suddenly wheeled round, squatted down on his heels, and immediately swooping down upon me, began to say in an extremely rapid, tremulous voice, interlarded with breaks: "Tchu-tchu-tchu!" I stood riveted to the spot. I had not seen him for a long time, and, of course, I would not have recognised him had I met him in any other place. That red, wrinkled, toothless face, those round, dull little eyes and dishevelled grey locks, those twitchings, those leaps, that unintelligible, faltering tongue . . . . what was it? What inhuman despair was torturing that unlucky being? What "dance of death" was this?

"Tchu, tchu," he stammered, without ceasing

to grimace,—"there she is, Vasílievna; she has just—tchu, tchu—gone . . . . hark! with a washing-trough along the roof" (he banged his head with his hand), "and is sitting there like a shovel; and squinting, squinting like Andriúsha; cross-eyed Vasílievna!" (He probably wanted to say "dumb.") "Tchu! my cross-eyed Vasílievna! There they are, both of them, now in the same fix. . . . Admire, ye Orthodox! I have only those two little boats! Hey?"

Látkin was evidently conscious that he was not talking straight, and was making frantic efforts to explain to me what was the matter. Raísa apparently did not hear what her father was saying at all, while her little sister continued to slash the air with her whip.

"Good-bye, jeweller, good-bye, good-bye!" drawled Látkin several times in succession, with low obeisances, as though delighted that he had, at last, caught hold of an intelligible word.

My head reeled.—"What is the meaning of all this?" I asked an old woman who was peeping out of one of the windows in the house.

"Why, you see, dear little father," she replied in a sing-song tone, "they say that some man or other—and who he is, the Lord only knows—has been drowned, and she saw it. Well, and she got thoroughly scared, I suppose; but she came home all right. But she sat straight down on the porch, and since that minute there she sits, like a statue;

it makes no difference whether one speaks to her or not. Evidently, she is doomed to dumbness also. Axhti-kti!"

"Good-bye, good-bye," Látkin kept repeating, still with obeisances as before. I stepped up to Raísa and halted directly in front of her.

"Raísotchka," I shouted, "what's the matter with thee?"

She made no reply; just as though she did not see me. Her face had not paled or changed, but somehow had become stony, and it wore an expression as though she were on the very verge of falling asleep.

"But she's cross-eyed, cross-eyed," stammered Látkin in my ear.

I grasped Raísa's hand.—"Davíd is alive," I shouted more loudly than before: "alive and well. Davíd is alive, dost thou understand? They pulled him out of the water, he is now at home and has bid me say that he will come to see thee tomorrow. . . . He is alive!"

Raísa turned her eyes on me with apparent difficulty; she winked the lids a couple of times, opening them wider and wider, then bent her head on one side, gradually flushed crimson all over, and her lips parted. . . . She inhaled the air into her lungs with a slow, full breath, wrinkled her brow as though in pain, and with a terrible effort articulating: "Yes . . . . Dav . . . ali . . . . alive!"

rose abruptly from the porch and set off at a run. . . .

"Where art thou going?" I cried.

But, laughing faintly and reeling, she was already running across the waste land.

Of course I darted after her, while behind me rose an energetic howl, decrepit and childish, from Látkin and the deaf-and-dumb girl. . . . Raísa was making straight for our house.

"Well, what a day this has been!" I thought, as I strove not to lag behind the black gown which was flitting on in front of me. . . . "Come on!"

XXII

Evading Vasíly, my aunt, and even Trankvillitátin, Raísa rushed into the room where Davíd lay, and flung herself straight upon his breast.—"Okh . . . . okh, Davídushko!" her voice rang out from under her dishevelled curls;—"okh!"

Energetically waving her hands, she embraced Davíd and bent her head down to him.

"Forgive me, my dear," his voice made itself audible.

And both seemed fairly swooning with joy.

"But why didst thou go off home, Raísa? Why didst not thou wait?" I said to her. . . . Still she did not raise her head.—"Thou wouldst have seen that they had saved him. . . ."

"Akh, I don't know! Akh, I don't know!

Don't ask me! I don't know, I don't remember how I got home. All I do remember is that I saw thee in the air . . . . something struck me . . . . But what came after that I don't know."

"Struck you," repeated Davíd, and all three of us suddenly burst into a hearty laugh. We felt very happy.

"But what may be the meaning of this, pray?" rang out a threatening voice—the voice of my father—behind us. He was standing on the threshold of the door. "Are these follies coming to an end or not? Where are we living? In the Russian empire or in the French republic?"

He stalked into the room.

"Go to France, any of you who want to revolt and lead a licentious life! And as for *thee,* how hast thou dared to come hither?" he addressed himself to Raísa, who, having softly risen and turned her face toward him, was obviously intimidated, but continued to smile in a caressing and blissful way.—"The daughter of my sworn enemy! How darest thou? And thou hast taken it into thy head to embrace him also! Begone this instant! or I'll . . . ."

"Uncle," said Davíd, sitting up in bed, "do not insult Raísa. She will go away . . . . only, don't you insult her."

"And who appointed thee my preceptor? I am not insulting her, I am not insulting her! I am simply turning her out of the house. I shall

call thee to account also. Thou hast squandered the property of other people, thou hast attempted thine own life, thou hast caused me losses."

"What losses?" interrupted Davíd.

"What losses? Thou hast ruined thy clothing —dost thou count that nothing? And I gave money for liquor to the men who brought thee hither! Thou hast frightened the whole family out of their lives, and thou art insolent to boot! And if this wench, forgetful of modesty and even of honour . . ."

Davíd sprang from his bed.—"Don't insult her, I tell you!"

"Hold thy tongue!"

"Don't you dare . . ."

"Hold thy tongue!"

"Don't you dare to defame my promised bride!" shouted Davíd at the top of his voice,— "my future wife!"

"Bride!" repeated my father, with eyes starting from his head.—"Bride!—Wife! Ho, ho, ho! . . ." ("Ha, ha, ha!" echoed my aunt outside the door.)—"And how old art thou, pray? He has lived in this world a year minus one month, the milk is n't dry on his lips yet, the hobbledehoy! And he is contemplating matrimony! Why, I . . . . why, thou . . . ."

"Let me go, let me go," whispered Raísa, turning to depart. She had grown livid.

"I shall not ask any permission of you," Davíd

continued in a shout, propping himself on the edge of the bed with his fists, "but of my own father, who is bound to arrive any day now! I take my orders from him, not from you; and as for my age, Raísa and I are not in a hurry . . . . we shall wait, say what you like. . . ."

"Hey there, Davíd, come to thy senses!" interrupted my father; "look at thyself: thou art all in tatters. . . . Thou hast lost all sense of decorum!"

Davíd clutched at the breast of his shirt with his hand.

"Whatever you may say . . . ." he repeated.

"Come, clap thy hand over his mouth, Porfíry Petróvitch, clap thy hand over his mouth," squealed my aunt outside the door.—"And as for this street-walker, this good-for-nothing wench . . . . this . . . ."

But evidently something unusual cut my aunt's eloquence short at that moment: her voice suddenly broke, and in place of it another, a hoarsely decrepit and weak voice, made itself heard. . . .

"Brother," enunciated this feeble voice. . . . "Brother! . . . . Christian soul!"

XXIII

We all turned round. . . . . Before us, in the same costume in which I had recently beheld him, gaunt, pitiful, wild, like a spectre, stood Látkin.

"But God," he articulated in a childish sort of way, elevating on high his trembling crooked finger and scanning my father with a feeble gaze, —"God has punished! And I have come for Va . . . yes, yes, for Raísotchka. What is it, tchu! What is it to me? I shall soon lie down in the earth—and how the deuce does it go? A stick . . . . another . . . . a joist . . . . that 's what I need . . . . But do thou, brother, jeweller . . . . Look out . . . . for I am also a man!"

Raísa silently walked across the room and linking her arm in his, buttoned his dressing-gown.

"Come along, Vasílievna," he said, "they 're all saints here; don't go to their house. And that fellow, the one who is lying yonder in the casket," —he pointed at Davíd,—"is a saint also. But we are sinners, thou and I. Well, tchu . . . . pardon a peppery old man, gentlemen! We stole together!" he suddenly shouted:—"we stole together! we stole together!" he repeated with manifest delight; his tongue had obeyed him at last.

All of us who were in the room held our peace.

"And where is your . . . . holy picture?" he asked, throwing back his head and rolling up his eyes. "I must purify myself."

He began to pray toward one of the corners, crossing himself with emotion several times in succession, tapping his fingers now against one shoulder, now against the other, and hurriedly re-

peating: "Have mercy upon me, O Lo . . . . me, O Lo . . . . me, O Lo! . . . ." My father, who all this time had never taken his eyes from Látkin nor uttered a single word, placed himself beside him and began to cross himself also. Then he turned to him, made a very low obeisance to him so that he touched the floor with one hand,[1] and saying: "And do thou also forgive me, Martinyán Gavrílitch," he kissed him on the shoulder. Látkin in reply smacked his lips in the air and blinked his eyes; it is hardly probable that he understood what he was doing. Then my father addressed himself to all who were present in the room, to Davíd, Raísa, and me:

"Do what you will, act as you see fit," he said in a quiet, sorrowful voice—and withdrew.

My aunt tried to approach him, but he yelled at her sharply and gruffly.

"Me, O Lo . . . . me, O Lo . . . . have mercy!" repeated Látkin.—"I am a man!"

"Good-bye, Davídushko," said Raísa, as she also quitted the room, accompanied by the old man.

"I shall go to your house to-morrow," Davíd called after them, and turning his face to the wall, he whispered: "I am very tired; it would n't be

[1] This takes the place of a full prostration on the knees with the brow touching the floor for elderly or ailing persons. The kiss on the shoulder is a sign of contrition or humility, that being the way the peasants used to kiss their masters.—TRANSLATOR.

a bad thing to get a little sleep now,"—and fell silent.

For a long time I did not leave our room. I hid myself. I could not forget what my father had threatened to do to me. But my apprehensions proved vain. He came across me—and did not utter a word. He seemed to feel ill at ease himself. However, night soon descended, and all quieted down in the house.

XXIV

On the following morning Davíd rose as though nothing had happened, and not long after, on that same day, two important events occurred: in the morning old Látkin died, and toward evening uncle Egór, Davíd's father, arrived in Ryazán. Without having sent any preliminary letter, without having forewarned any one, he descended upon us like snow on the head.[1] My father was extremely disturbed and did not know wherewith he should entertain, where he should seat the welcome guest, and bustled about like a culprit; but my uncle did not appear to be greatly touched by his brother's anxious zeal; he kept repeating, "What 's the use of that?"—and "I do not want anything." He treated my aunt with even greater coldness; however, she did not like him much, anyway. In her eyes he was a godless man,

[1] Suddenly, unexpectedly.—Translator.

a heretic, a Voltairian . . . . (he actually had learned the French language in order to read Voltaire in the original).

I found uncle Egór such as Davíd had described him to me. He was a big, heavy, ponderous man, with a broad, pock-marked face, dignified and serious. He wore constantly a hat with a plume, lace ruffles and frill, and a short-coat of tobacco-brown hue, with a steel sword on his hip. Davíd was unspeakably delighted to see him—his face even grew radiant and handsomer, and his eyes became quite different—merry, quick, and brilliant; but he strove his best to moderate his joy and did not express it in words: he was afraid of growing faint-hearted.

The very first night after uncle Egór's arrival the two—father and son—locked themselves up in the room assigned to the former and talked together for a long time in an undertone; on the following morning I noticed that my uncle gazed at his son in a peculiarly affectionate and trustful manner: he seemed greatly pleased with him. Davíd took him to the requiem service [1] for Látkin; I also went thither: my father did not hinder me, but remained at home himself. Raísa surprised me by her calmness; she had grown very

[1] Not the funeral, or even a requiem liturgy, but a service composed of wonderfully-beautiful prayers and hymns. Often it is held in the house of the deceased twice a day during the three days which precede burial (which is what is meant here, although in this case it was in church), and at any time thereafter when the friends and relatives request it.—Translator.

pale and thin, but she shed no tears, and spoke and behaved very simply; and nevertheless, strange to say, I discerned in her a certain majesty: the unconscious majesty of grief which forgets itself. Uncle Egór made her acquaintance then and there, on the church porch; afterward it was obvious from the way he treated her that Davíd had already spoken to him of her. He took as great a liking to her as his son had done; I could read that in Davíd's eyes when he looked at them. I remember how they flashed when his father said in his presence, in speaking of her: "She 's a clever lass; she will make a good housewife." At the Látkins' house I was told that the old man had expired quietly, like a candle which is burned out, and until he lost his powers and his consciousness he kept stroking his daughter's hair and repeating something unintelligible but not sorrowful, and smiling all the while.

My father went to the funeral, to the church and the grave, and prayed very fervently; even Trankvillitátin sang in the choir. At the grave Raísa suddenly burst out sobbing and fell prone upon the earth; but she speedily recovered herself. Her little sister, the deaf-and-dumb girl, scrutinised every one with her large, bright, and somewhat frightened eyes; from time to time she nestled up to Raísa, but there was no fright perceptible in her. On the day after the funeral, uncle

Egór, who, as was in every way apparent, had not returned from Siberia with empty hands (he had furnished the money for the funeral, and had lavishly rewarded Davíd's rescuer), but who had told nothing about his manner of life there and had communicated none of his plans for the future,—uncle Egór suddenly announced to my father that he did not intend to remain in Ryazán, but was going to Moscow together with his son. My father, for the sake of propriety, expressed his regret, and even made an attempt—a very feeble one, it is true—to alter my uncle's decision; but in the depths of his soul he was greatly delighted with it, I am sure.

The presence of a brother with whom he had too little in common, who did not even deign to reproach him, who did not even despise him, but simply loathed him, oppressed him . . . . and the parting with Davíd did not constitute any particular grief for him. This separation annihilated me, of course; I felt completely orphaned at first, and lost all hold on life and all desire to live.

So my uncle went away, taking with him not only Davíd, but, to the great amazement and even indignation of our whole street, Raísa and her little sister also. . . . . On learning of this performance of his, my aunt immediately called him a Turk, and continued to call him so to the end of her life.

I was left alone, quite alone. . . . But it does not matter about me. . . .

XXV

And this is the end of my story about the watch. What else can I tell you? Five years later, Davíd married his Black-lip, and in 1812, with the rank of ensign in the artillery, died a death of glory on the day of the battle at Borodinó, while defending the Shevardín redoubt.

Many things have happened since then, and I have had many watches; I have even attained to the magnificence of procuring for myself a genuine Bréget with a second-hand, the days of the month, and a repeating attachment. . . . But in a secret drawer of my writing-table is preserved an old silver watch with a rose on its face; I bought it of a Jew pedlar, being struck with its resemblance to the watch which had once been presented to me by my godfather.—From time to time, when I am alone and am not expecting any one, I take it out of its box, and as I gaze at it, I recall the days of my youth and the comrade of those days, which have vanished beyond recall. . . .

SMOKE

(1867)

SMOKE

I

AT four o'clock, on the afternoon of the tenth of August, in the year 1862, a large number of persons were assembled in front of the famous "Conversation" (Hall) in Baden-Baden. The weather continued to be delightful; everything round about—the verdant trees, the bright-hued houses of the comfortable town, the undulating hills—everything lay outspread in festive guise, with lavish hand, beneath the rays of the benignant sun; everything was smiling in a passive, confiding and engaging manner, and the same sort of vague yet amiable smile strayed over the faces of the people, young and old, homely and handsome. Even the dyed and bleached faces of the Parisian courtesans did not destroy the general impression of manifest satisfaction and exultation, but the motley-hued ribbons and feathers, the glints of gold and steel on bonnets and veils, involuntarily suggested to the vision the reanimated gleam and light play of springtide flowers and rainbow-hued wings: but the dry, guttural rattle of French gabble could not take

the place of the twittering of the birds, or bear comparison therewith.

However, everything was going on as usual. The orchestra in the pavilion played now a pot-pourri from "La Traviata," again a waltz by Strauss, or *Dites-lui,* or a Russian romance arranged for instruments by the obliging bandmaster; around the green tables in the gambling-halls thronged the same familiar figures, with the same dull and greedy expression as ever, an expression neither exactly perplexed nor yet irritated, but essentially rapacious, which the gambling fever imparts to all, even to the most aristocratic features; the usual obese landed proprietor from Tambóff, in extremely dandified attire, with the usual incomprehensible, convulsive haste, and eyes protruding, leaning his breast on the table, and paying no heed to the grins of the croupiers, at the moment of uttering the exclamation, "*Rien ne va plus!*" was scattering circles of louis d'or, with perspiring hand, over all the squares of the roulette-board, and thereby depriving himself of all possibility of winning anything, even in the case of luck; which did not in the least prevent him, in the course of that same evening, from humouring with sympathetic wrath Prince Kokó, one of the well-known leaders of the opposition among the gentry, the Prince Kokó who, in Paris, in the drawing-room of Princess Mathilde, in the presence of the Emperor, remarked so truly:

" Madame, le principe de la propriété est profondément ébranlé en Russie." According to their wont, our amiable fellow-countrymen and women assembled at the " Russian Tree "—*à l' Arbre Russe;*—they strolled up ostentatiously, carelessly, fashionably, greeted each other majestically, with elegant ease, as is befitting beings who stand at the apex of contemporary culture, but, having met and seated themselves, they positively did not know what to say to one another, and contented themselves with the exchange of empty phrases, or with the threadbare, extremely impudent and extremely insipid sallies of a French ex-literary man, who had long since seen his best days, a jester and chatter-box, with Jewish slippers on his wretched little feet, and with a contemptible little beard on his miserable little phiz. He babbled to them, *à ces princes Russes,* all sorts of stale nonsense out of ancient almanacs of the *Charivari* and *Tintamarre, . .* while they—*ces princes Russes*—burst into grateful laughter, as though involuntarily acknowledging both the overwhelming superiority of foreign wit and their own definitive incapacity to devise anything amusing. And yet there was present almost all the *" fine fleur "* of our society, " all the quality and the models of fashion." There was Count X., our incomparable dilettante, a profound musical nature, who " recites " romances so divinely, and, as a matter of fact, cannot distinguish one

note from another without poking his forefinger at random over the keys, and sings somewhat like an indifferently poor gipsy, somewhat like a Parisian hair-dresser; there was also our enchanting Baron Z., that jack of all trades: literary man, administrator, orator and sharper; there was also Prince Y., the friend of religion and of the people, who had amassed a huge fortune in his time, the blessed epoch of monopolies, by the sale of inferior liquor adulterated with stramonium; and brilliant General O. O., who has subdued something or other, is the pacificator of somebody or other, but, nevertheless, does not know what to do with himself, or how to make himself agreeable; and R. R., an amusing fat man, who regards himself as a very ailing and very clever fellow, but is as healthy as an ox and as stupid as a stump. This R. R. is almost the only person who in our day still preserves the tradition of the social lions of the '40's of the epoch of "The Hero of Our Times"[1] and of Countess Vorotýnsky. He has retained also the gait with its swing from the heels, and *"le culte de la pose"* (which cannot even be expressed in Russian), and the unnatural deliberation of movement, and the sleepy majesty of expression on the impassive, as it were offended, countenance, and the habit of interrupting other people's remarks with a yawn, carefully inspecting

[1] By M. Y. Lérmontoff.—Translator.

his own fingers and nails the while, of laughing straight in people's faces, of suddenly tilting the hat from the nape of the neck over the brows, and so forth, and so forth. There were also even governmental officials, diplomats, big-wigs with European reputations, men of good counsel and sense, who imagine that the golden bull was issued by the Pope, and that the English " poor-tax " is an impost on the poor; there were, in conclusion, fiery but bashful admirers of the frail fair ones, young society dandies with their hair supremely well parted behind, with superb pendent side-whiskers, attired in real London costumes, young dandies whom, apparently, nothing could prevent from becoming the same sort of vulgar triflers as the renowned French chatterer; but no! nothing native-born is in vogue with us,—and Countess Sh., the well-known law-giver of fashion, and of the " grand genre," nicknamed by malicious tongues " The Tzarítza of the Wasps " and " The Medusa in a Mob-cap," preferred, in the absence of the prattler, to turn to the Italians, Moldavians, American " spiritists," dashing secretaries of foreign legations, petty Germans with effeminate but already cautious physiognomies, and so forth, who were hovering about there also. In imitation of the Countess's example, Princess Babette also, the one in whose arms Chopin died (there are about a thousand ladies in Europe in whose arms he yielded up his spirit), and Princess

Annette, who would have possessed every charm were it not that from time to time suddenly, like the odour of cabbage in the midst of the finest amber, the common country washerwoman had not cropped out; and Princess Pachette, to whom the following catastrophe happened: her husband lighted upon a conspicuous position and all of a sudden, *Dieu salt pourquoi,* he thrashed the mayor of the town and stole twenty thousand rubles of the government money; and that mirthful maiden —Princess Zizi, and tearful Princess Zozo; all of them deserted their fellow-country people and treated them ungraciously. . . But let us also desert them, these charming ladies, and quit the famous tree around which they are seated in such costly but rather tasteless toilettes, and may the Lord send them relief from the ennui which is tormenting them!

II

Several paces removed from the "Russian Tree," at a small table in front of Weber's café, sat a man about thirty years of age, of medium stature, lean and swarthy, with a manly and agreeable face. Bending forward and leaning on his cane with both hands, he sat quietly and simply, like a man to whom the idea would never occur that any one was noticing him or taking an interest in him. His large, expressive eyes, brown with a tawny tinge, gazed slowly about him, now blinking a little with the sunlight, again suddenly and intently following some eccentric figure that passed by, in which last case a swift, childlike smile barely moved his slight moustache, his lips and strong physiognomy. He was clad in a loose frock-coat of German cut, and his soft grey hat half concealed his lofty brow. At first sight he produced the impression of an honourable, active and rather self-confident young fellow, of which sort there are not a few in the world. He appeared to be resting from prolonged labours, and with all the more singleness of mind was diverting himself with the picture which unfolded itself before him, because his thoughts were far away, and because, moreover, those thoughts were re-

volving in a world which did not in the least resemble that which surrounded him at that moment. He was a Russian; his name was Grigóry Mikhaílovitch Litvínoff.

We must make his acquaintance, and therefore it becomes necessary to narrate, in a few words, his far from gay or complicated past.

The son of a retired plodding official from the merchant class, he had not been educated in town, as might have been expected, but in the country. His mother was a noble by birth, a girl from one of the Government Institutes, a very amiable and very enthusiastic being, yet not lacking in strength of character. Being twelve years younger than her husband, she remodelled his education as far as she was able, dragged him out of the official into the noble rut, tamed and softened his harsh, vigorous nature. Thanks to her, he had come to dress neatly and behave with propriety, and had left off swearing; he had come to respect learned men and learning,—although, of course, he never took a book in his hand,—and endeavoured in every way never to derogate from his dignity: he even began to walk more lightly, and he spoke in a subdued voice, chiefly on lofty subjects, which cost him no little trouble. "Ekh! I 'd like to take and spank you!" he sometimes said to himself, but aloud he remarked: "Yes, yes . . . of course; that is the question." Litvínoff's mother had put her house-

hold also on a European footing; she said " you " to the servants, and permitted no one to overeat at dinner to the point of snoring. So far as the estate which belonged to her was concerned, neither she nor her husband had been able to make anything out of it: it had long been neglected, but was extensive with various meadows, forests and a lake, beside which, in times gone by, had stood a large factory established by the zealous but unsystematic owner, which had thriven in the hands of a knavish merchant, and had finally come to ruin under the direction of an honest manager, a German. Madame Litvínoff was satisfied with not having impaired her property and with having contracted no debts. Unfortunately, she could not boast of good health, and died of consumption during the very year that her son entered the Moscow University. He did not finish his course, owing to circumstances (the reader will learn later on what they were), and lounged about in the country, where he enjoyed life for a considerable time without occupation, or connections, almost without acquaintances. Thanks to the nobles of his county, who were ill-disposed toward him, and imbued not so much with the Western theory of the evils of " absenteeism " as with the innate conviction that " charity begins at home," he was got into the militia in 1855, and came near dying of typhus in the Crimea, where, without having beheld a single " ally," he was

quartered for six months in an earth-hut on the banks of the Putrid Sea; then he served in the elections, as a matter of course, not without unpleasantness, and finding himself at ease in the country he became passionately devoted to farming. He comprehended that his mother's property, badly and indolently managed by his now infirm father, did not yield a tenth part of the income which it was capable of yielding, and that in experienced and expert hands it might be converted into a regular gold mine; but he also comprehended that precisely what he lacked was this experience and skill—and he betook himself abroad to study agronomy and technology—to study them from the very foundation. He had spent more than four years in Mecklenburg, Silesia, Karlsruhe, he had travelled in Belgium and in England, he had laboured conscientiously, he had acquired information: it had not been easily acquired; but he had endured the ordeal to the end, and now, confident of himself, of his future, of the utility he could bring to his fellow-countrymen, even to the whole country, he was preparing to return to his native land, whither his father, utterly disconcerted by the emancipation, by the division of lands, by the redemption contracts,—by the new order of things, in short,—was summoning him with despairing adjurations and entreaties in every letter. . . But why was he in Baden?

He was in Baden because from day to day he was expecting the arrival there of his second cousin, his affianced bride,—Tatyána Petróvna Shestóff. He had known her almost from childhood, and had passed the spring and summer with her in Dresden, where she had settled with her aunt. He sincerely loved, he profoundly respected his young relative, and having completed his obscure preparatory work, and being on the point of entering upon a new career, of beginning active, not state service, he had proposed to her, as to a beloved woman, as to a comrade and friend, that she should unite her life to his life—for joy and for sorrow, for toil and for repose, " for better, for worse," as the English say. She had consented, and he had betaken himself to Karlsruhe, where he had left his books, his things and his papers. . . But why was he in Baden, you ask again?

He was in Baden because Tatyána's aunt, who had reared her, Kapitólina Márkovna Shestóff, an elderly spinster of fifty-five years, a most kind-hearted and honourable eccentric, a free soul, all burning with the fire of self-sacrifice and self-renunciation, an *esprit fort* (she read Strauss,—on the sly from her niece, it is true), and democrat, a sworn foe of grand society and the aristocracy, could not resist the temptation to take just one little peep at that same grand society in such a fashionable place as Baden. . . Kapitó-

lina Márkovna dispensed with crinoline and clipped her white hair in a shock, but luxury and brilliancy secretly agitated her, and she found it joyful and sweet to rail against them and despise them. . . And how could one refuse to divert the kindly old lady?

But Litvínoff was so calm and simple, he gazed about him so confidently, because his life lay before him with precise clearness, because his fate had been settled, and because he was proud of that fate, and was rejoicing in it, as the work of his own hands.

III

"Ba! ba! ba! here he is!" a squeaking voice suddenly rang out straight in his ear, and a flabby hand tapped him on the shoulder.

He raised his head,—and beheld one of his few Moscow acquaintances, a certain Bambáeff, a nice man, one of the triflers, no longer young, with cheeks and nose as soft as though they had been boiled, greasy, dishevelled hair, and a flabby, obese body. Eternally penniless and eternally in raptures over something or other, Rostisláff Bambáeff roamed to and fro, with a hurrah but without occupation, over the face of our long-suffering mother earth.

"The very person I wanted to see!"—he repeated, opening wide his fat-obscured little eyes, and thrusting out his thick little lips, above which a dyed moustache stuck out in a strange and inappropriate manner.—"Hurrah for Baden! Every one crawls hither like black beetles. How didst thou get here?"

Bambáeff addressed positively every one on earth as "thou."

"I arrived three days ago."

"Whence?"

"But why dost thou wish to know?"

"Why, indeed! But wait, wait, perhaps thou dost not know who else has arrived here? Gubaryóff! That 's who is here! He came from Heidelberg yesterday. Of course thou knowest him?"

"I have heard of him."

"Only that? Good gracious! Instantly, this very minute, I shall drag thee to him. Not know such a man! And, by the way, here 's Voroshíloff. . . . Stay, perhaps thou dost not know him either? I have the honour to present you to each other. Both of you are learned men. He 's even a very phœnix. Kiss each other!"

And as he uttered these words, Bambáeff turned to a handsome young man with a rosy but already serious face, who was standing beside him. Litvínoff rose, and of course did not kiss him, but exchanged a brief salute with the "phœnix," who, judging by the stiffness of his demeanour, was not any too well pleased by this unexpected introduction.

"I said a phœnix, and I will not withdraw the word," continued Bambáeff:—"go to Petersburg, to the * * * Cadet Corps, and look at the golden board—roll of honour—whose name stands first there? Voroshíloff Semyón Yakóvlevitch! But Gubaryóff, Gubaryóff, my dear fellows! That 's the man to whom we must run, run! I positively worship that man! And I 'm

not the only one; all, without distinction, adore him. What a work he is now writing, oh . . . oh . . . oh!"

"What is the work about?" inquired Litvínoff.

"About everything, my dear fellow, in the style of Buckle, you know . . only more profound—more profound. . . In it everything will be settled and made clear."

"And hast thou read that work thyself?"

"No, I have not; and it is even a secret which must not be divulged; but from Gubaryóff everything is to be expected, everything! Yes!"—Bambáeff sighed and folded his hands.—"What if two or three more such heads were bred among us in Russia, what would happen, O Lord my God! I 'll tell thee one thing, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch: whatever thou mayest have been occupying thyself with of late,—and I do not know what thy interests in general are,—whatever may be thy convictions,—and I know nothing about them either,—thou wilt find something to learn from him, from Gubaryóff. Unfortunately, he will not be here long. We must take advantage of the opportunity, we must go. To him, to him!"

A passing dandy with small red curls and a sky-blue ribbon on his low-crowned hat turned round and stared at Bambáeff through his monocle with a sarcastic smile. Litvínoff was vexed.

"Why dost thou shout?" he ejaculated:—

" thou yellest as though after a hound! I have not yet dined."

" What of that! We can dine immediately at Weber's . . all three. . Capital! Hast thou the money to pay for me? " he added in an undertone.

" Yes, yes; only really I do not know . . ."

" Stop, please; thou wilt thank me, and he will be glad. Akh, my God! " Bambáeff broke off.— " They 're playing the finale from ' Ernani.' How charming! *A som . . . mo Carlo.* . . But what a fellow I am! I begin to cry at once. Well, Semyón Yakóvlevitch! Voroshíloff! Shall we go? "

Voroshíloff, who was still standing in a stiff and stately attitude, maintaining his original somewhat haughty dignity of mien, dropped his eyes significantly, frowned, and bellowed something through his teeth . . . but did not refuse; and Litvínoff said to himself: " Never mind! let 's do it, seeing there 's plenty of time." Bambaéff slipped his arm into his, but before setting out for the café he beckoned to Isabella, the famous flower-girl of the Jockey Club: it had occurred to him to buy a bouquet of her. But the aristocratic flower-girl did not stir; and why should she go to a gentleman without gloves, in a stained velveteen jacket, a variegated necktie, and patched boots, whom she had never beheld in Paris? Then Voroshíloff beckoned to her in his turn. She went to him, and he, selecting from her basket a

tiny bunch of violets, tossed her a gulden. He had thought to astonish her with his lavishness; but she never moved an eyelash, and when he turned away from her she curled her closely-compressed lips in scorn. Voroshíloff was very foppishly, even elegantly, clad, but the experienced eye of the Parisienne had instantly noted in his toilette, in his very gait, which bore traces of early military drilling, the absence of genuine, thoroughbred "chic."

When our acquaintances had seated themselves in Weber's principal room and had ordered dinner, they entered into conversation. Bambáeff talked loudly and fervently about the lofty significance of Gubaryóff, but soon fell silent, and noisily sighing and chewing, clinked glass to glass. Voroshíloff ate and drank little, and having questioned Litvínoff as to the nature of his occupation, began to express his own opinions . . . not so much with regard to that occupation as in general about various "questions." . . He suddenly grew animated and started off at full gallop, like a good horse, adroitly and sharply emphasising every syllable, every letter, like a fine dashing young cadet at his final examination, and waving his arms violently, but not in accord. He became momentarily more voluble, more energetic, as no one interrupted him: it was exactly as though he were reading a dissertation or a lecture. The names of the newest

savants, with the year of each one's birth or death added, the title of pamphlets which had just been published, in general names, names, names,—fell thick and fast from his tongue, affording him the highest gratification, which was reflected in his flashing eyes. Voroshíloff evidently despised everything old, prized only the cream of culture, the latest, most advanced points of science; to mention, even inopportunely, the book of some Doctor Sauerbrengel about the prisons in Pennsylvania, or an article which had appeared the previous day in *The Asiatic Journal* about the Vedas and the Puranas (he said it in just that way: "Journal," although, of course, he did not know English)—was for him genuine delight, felicity. Litvínoff listened to him, listened and could not in the least understand what his own speciality was. Now he turned the conversation upon the rôle of the Celtic race in history; again it bore him off to the ancient world, and he argued about the marbles of Ægina, harped insistently on the sculptor Onatas, who lived before Phidias, but who, in his hands, was transformed into Jonathan, and thereby, in the twinkling of an eye, imparted to his whole argument a biblical or American colouring; then he suddenly jumped to political economy, and called Bastia a fool and a blockhead, "as much so as Adam Smith and all the physiocrats" . . . "Physiocrats!" Bambáeff whispered after him . . . "Aristocrats? . . ."

Among other things, Voroshíloff had evoked an expression of amazement on the countenance of that same Bambáeff by a remark carelessly and lightly dropped concerning Macaulay, as an obsolete author who had been left in the lurch by science; as for Gneist and Riehl, he declared that it was merely necessary to name them, and shrugged his shoulders. Bambáeff shrugged his shoulders also. "And all this at one burst, without any motive whatever, in the presence of strangers in a café," meditated Litvínoff, as he gazed at the blond hair, the light eyes, the white teeth of his new acquaintance (he was particularly disturbed by those huge, sugar-like teeth, and also by those arms, with their inappropriate flourishes); "and he does not smile even once; and yet he must be a kindly young fellow and extremely inexperienced. . ." Voroshíloff quieted down at last; his voice, youthfully resonant and hoarse as that of a young cock, broke a little . . . and Bambáeff in the nick of time began to declaim verses, and again almost fell to weeping, which produced the effect of a row at one neighbouring table, around which an English family was seated, and a tittering at another: two courtesans were dining at this second table with a very aged infant in a lilac wig. The waiter brought the bill; the friends paid it.

"Well," exclaimed Bambáeff, rising heavily from his chair:—"now for a cup of coffee, and

march! But yonder it is, our Russia," he added, halting in the doorway, and almost with rapture pointing with his soft, red hand at Voroshíloff and Litvínoff. . . "What do you think of it?"

"Yes, Russia," thought Litvínoff; but Voroshíloff, who had already again succeeded in imparting to his face a concentrated expression, smiled condescendingly, and lightly clicked his heels together.

Five minutes later all three of them were mounting the stairs of the hotel where Stepán Nikoláevitch Gubaryóff was stopping. . . A tall, stately lady, in a bonnet with a short black veil, was descending the same staircase, and on catching sight of Litvínoff she suddenly turned to him and halted, as though struck with amazement. Her face flushed for a moment and then as swiftly paled beneath the close meshes of the lace; but Litvínoff did not notice her, and the lady ran more briskly than before down the broad steps.

IV

"Grigóry Litvínoff is a jolly good fellow, a Russian soul; I recommend him," exclaimed Bambáeff, conducting Litvínoff up to a man of short stature and the appearance of the landed gentry class, with an unbuttoned collar, in a short-tailed coat, grey morning trousers, and slippers, who was standing in the middle of a bright, capitally-furnished room;—"and this," he added, turning to Litvínoff,—"this is he, the very man; you understand? Well, in one word, Gubaryóff."

Litvínoff fixed his eyes with curiosity on "the very man." At first he perceived nothing unusual about him. He beheld before him a gentleman of respectable and rather stupid appearance, with a large forehead, large eyes, a large beard, a thick neck, and an oblique glance, which was directed downward. This gentleman simpered, muttered: "Mmm . . . yes . . . that 's good . . . I 'm delighted . . . ," raised his hand to his own face, and immediately turning his back on Litvínoff, strode several paces across the carpet, wabbling slowly and strangely, as though he were walking stealthily. Gubaryóff had a habit of constantly walking to and fro, incessantly pluck-

ing at and combing his beard with the tips of his long, firm nails. In addition to Gubaryóff there was in the room a lady in a shabby silk gown, about fifty years of age, with a remarkably mobile face as yellow as a lemon, black down on her upper lip, and vivacious little eyes which seemed on the point of popping out; a thick-set man was also sitting there doubled up in a corner.

"Well, ma'am, respected Matróna Semyónovna," began Gubaryóff, addressing the lady, and evidently not considering it necessary to introduce her to Litvínoff;—"dear me, what was it that you had begun to tell us?"

The lady (her name was Matróna Semyónovna Sukhántchikoff; she was a widow, childless, not rich, and this was the second year that she had spent in wandering from land to land) immediately began to talk with a peculiar, embittered enthusiasm:

"Well, and so he presents himself to the Prince, and says to him: 'Your Illustrious Highness,' says he,—'with your dignity and your station, what does it cost you to alleviate my lot? You,' says he, 'cannot fail to respect the purity of my convictions! And is it possible,' says he, 'in our day to persecute a man because of his convictions?' And what do you think the Prince,—that cultured, highly-placed dignitary—did?"

"Well, what did he do?" ejaculated Gubaryóff, thoughtfully lighting a cigarette.

The lady drew herself up, and stretched out in front of her her bony right hand, with the index finger separated.

"He called his lackey, and said to him: 'Strip the coat off this man and take possession of it. I make you a present of his coat.'"

"And did the lackey strip it off?" inquired Bambáeff, clasping his hands.

"He stripped it off and took it. And that was done by Prince Barnaúloff, the famous rich man, the grandee, invested with special power, the representative of the government! What may we expect after that!"

Madame Sukhántchikoff's feeble body quivered all over with indignation, convulsive shivers flitted across her face, her emaciated bosom heaved violently beneath her flat bodice; it is unnecessary to mention her eyes: they fairly leaped. However, they were always leaping, whatever she was talking about.

"'T is a crying, crying shame!" ejaculated Bambáeff.—"Hanging is too good for him!"

"Mmm . . . mmm . . . From top to bottom it 's all rotten," remarked Gubaryóff, but without raising his voice.—"It is n't a case for hanging; . . . 't is a case . . . for other measures."

"But stay; is it true?" said Litvínoff.

"Is it true?" retorted Madame Sukhántchikoff.—"Why, it 's impossible even to think of doubting, impossible to thi-i-i-ink of such a

thing. ." She uttered the word with such force that she fairly writhed.—" It was told to me by a most reliable man. And you know him, Stepán Nikoláevitch—Kapitón Elistrátoff. He heard it himself from an eye-witness, from a witness of that outrageous scene."

" What Elistrátoff?" inquired Gubaryóff.—" The one who was in Kazán?"

" The very man. I know, Stepán Nikoláitch, that a rumour was circulated about him that he had got money out of some contractor or distiller or other. But who says that? Pelikánoff! And can one believe Pelikánoff, when everybody knows that he is simply—a spy?"

" No, permit me, Matróna Semyónovna," interposed Bambáeff:—" I am Pelikánoff's friend; I don't believe he is a spy."

" Yes, yes, exactly that, a spy!"

" But wait a bit, please. . ."

" A spy, a spy!" screamed Madame Sukhántchikoff.

" But he is n't, no, wait; I 'll tell you something," shouted Bambáeff in his turn.

" A spy, a spy!" reiterated Madame Sukhántchikoff.

" No, no! There 's Tenteléeff—that 's quite another matter!" roared Bambáeff at the top of his voice.

Madame Sukhántchikoff became silent for a moment.

" I know it for a fact, with regard to that gentleman," continued Bambáeff in his ordinary voice, " that when the Third Section summoned him he crawled at the feet of Countess Blazenkampf and kept whining: ' Save me, intercede for me!' But Pelikánoff never descended to such baseness."

" Mm . . . Tenteléeff . . ." growled Gubaryóff:—" that . . that must be noted."

Madame Sukhántchikoff scornfully shrugged her shoulders.

" Both are good," she remarked:—" but I know a still better anecdote about Tenteléeff. As every one knows, he was the most dreadful tyrant with his people, although he gave himself out as an emancipator. Well, one day he was sitting with some acquaintances in Paris, when, all of a sudden, in comes Mrs. Beecher Stowe,—well, you know, ' Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Tenteléeff, a frightfully conceited man, began to urge the host to present him; but as soon as Mrs. Stowe heard his name: ' What?'—says she:—' how dares he make acquaintance with the author of ' Uncle Tom'? And, whack, she slapped his face!—' Begone!' says she,—' this instant!'—And what do you think? Tenteléeff took his hat, and putting his tail between his legs, he slunk off."

" Well, that strikes me as exaggerated," remarked Bambáeff.—" That she did say ' Be-

gone!' to him is a fact; but she did not slap his face."

"She did slap his face, she did slap his face," repeated Madame Sukhántchikoff, with convulsive intensity:—"I don't talk nonsense. And you are the friend of such people!"

"Excuse me, excuse me, Matróna Semyónovna, I never asserted that Tenteléeff was an intimate friend of mine; I was speaking of Pelikánoff."

"Well, if it was n't Tenteléeff, it was some one else: Mikhnyóff, for instance."

"What did he do?" asked Bambáeff, intimidated in advance.

"What? Don't you really know? On the Vosnesénsky Prospékt, in the presence of everybody, he shouted out that all liberals ought to be in prison; and then an old boarding-school comrade, a poor man, of course, comes up to him, and says: 'May I dine with you?' But he answered him: 'No, you cannot; two Counts are to dine with me to-day . . . . g' 'way!'"

"But good gracious, that is a calumny!" clamoured Bambáeff.

"A calumny? . . . a calumny? In the first place, Prince Vakhrúshkin, who also was dining with your Mikhnyóff . . ."

"Prince Vakhrúshkin," interposed Gubaryóff sternly,—"is my first cousin; but I will not re-

ceive him. . . Consequently, there is no use of mentioning him."

"In the second place," continued Madame Sukhántchikoff, submissively inclining her head in the direction of Gubaryóff:—"Praskóvya Yakóvlevna herself told me so."

"A fine person to allege as authority! She and Sarkísoff are first-class inventors of tales."

"Well, sir, you must excuse me; Sarkísoff is a liar, that 's a fact, and that he pulled the brocade pall off his dead father I will never deny; but Praskóvya Yakóvlevna,—what a comparison! Recollect how nobly she separated from her husband! But you, I know, are always ready to . . . . ."

"Come, that will do, that will do, Matróna Semyónovna," Bambáeff interrupted her.—"Let us drop this tittle-tattle and soar aloft. I 'm a poker of ancient make,[1] you see. Have you read 'M'lle de la Quintinie'? It 's charming! And with exactly your principles!"

"I no longer read romances," replied Madame Sukhántchikoff, drily and curtly.

"Why?"

Because it is no time for such things; I have only one thing in my head now—sewing-machines."

"What sort of machines?" inquired Litvínoff.

"Sewing-, sewing-machines; all women, all,

[1] An old-fashioned man.—Translator.

must supply themselves with sewing-machines, and form a society; in that way they will all earn their living and will at once become independent. Otherwise, they cannot possibly free themselves. It is an important, an important social question. Boléslaff Stadnítzky and I had such a dispute about that. Boléslaff Stadnítzky has a wonderful nature, but he looks on these things in a frightfully frivolous way. He does nothing but laugh. . . . The fool!"

"All men will be summoned, in due season, to an accounting—all men will be held responsible," remarked Gubaryóff slowly, in a partly dogmatic, partly prophetic tone.

"Yes, yes," repeated Bambáeff:—"they will be held responsible—exactly so, held responsible. And how about your work, Stepán Nikoláitch," he added, lowering his voice:—"is it progressing?"

"I am collecting the materials," replied Gubaryóff, knitting his brows; and turning to Litvínoff, whose head was growing giddy with that mess of names which were unfamiliar to him, with that frenzy of gossip, asked him: with what did he occupy himself?

Litvínoff satisfied his curiosity.

"Ah! that is to say with the natural sciences. That is useful, as a school. As a school, not as a goal. The goal now should be . . . . mm . . . should be . . . something else. Per-

mit me to inquire, with what opinions do you take sides?"

"What opinions?"

"Yes; that is to say, what are your political convictions?"

Litvínoff smiled.

"I really have no political opinions whatever."

At these words the thick-set man, who was sitting in the corner, suddenly raised his head, and gazed attentively at Litvínoff.

"How so?" said Gubaryóff, with strange gentleness.—"Have n't you gone into the subject yet, or have you already grown tired of it?"

"How shall I explain it to you? It seems to me that it is still too early for us Russians to have political opinions, or to imagine that we have them. Observe that I give to the word 'political' the meaning which rightfully belongs to it, and that . . . ."

"Aha! you 're one of the unripe ones," Gubaryóff interrupted him with the same gentleness, and approaching Voroshíloff, he asked him:—had he read the pamphlet which he had given him?

Voroshíloff, who, to Litvínoff's surprise, had not uttered the smallest word since his arrival, but had merely scowled and rolled his eyes about (as a rule he either orated or maintained complete silence),—Voroshíloff thrust out his chest in military fashion, and clicking his heels together, nodded his head in the affirmative.

"Well, and what then? Were you pleased?"

"So far as the principal premises are concerned, but I do not agree with the deductions."

"Mmm . . . but Andréi Iványitch praised that pamphlet to me very highly. You must state your doubts to me later on."

Gubaryóff was evidently surprised: he had not expected this; but after reflecting briefly, he articulated:

"Yes, in writing. By the way, I will ask you to state for me also your views . . . . as to . . . as to association."

"Would you like it after the method of Lassalle, or of Schulze-Delitzsch?"

"Mmm . . . after both methods. You understand that the financial side is especially important for us Russians. Well, and the workingmen's union [1] as the kernel. . . All that must be taken into consideration. It must be thoroughly investigated. And there is the question of the peasants' allotments. . ."

"And what is your opinion, Stepán Nikoláitch, as to the suitable amount of desyatínas?" inquired Voroshíloff, with respectful delicacy in his voice.

"Mmm . . . And the commune?" said Gubaryóff with profundity, and gnawing a tuft of

[1] The *artél*, which represents workingmen united in voluntary, elastic associations for the purpose of fulfilling contracts to advantage, insuring trustworthiness, and so forth.—Translator.

his beard he riveted his eyes on the leg of the table. —"The commune. . . Do you understand? That is a grand word! And then, what is the meaning of these conflagrations . . . . these governmental measures against Sunday-schools,[1] reading-rooms, newspapers?—and, in conclusion, that which is going on in Poland? Do you not see to what all this is leading, that . . . mm . . . that we . . . we must now fuse ourselves with the people, must find out . . find out their opinion?" —Gubaryóff was suddenly seized with a painful, almost malignant, agitation; he even turned a greyish-brown hue in the face and breathed more vehemently, but still he did not raise his eyes, and continued to chew his beard.—"Do you not see . . . ."

"Evséeff is a scoundrel!" suddenly blurted out Madame Sukhántchikoff, to whom Bambáeff was narrating something in an undertone, out of respect for the host. Gubaryóff wheeled abruptly round on his heels, and began again to hobble up and down the room.

New guests began to make their appearance; toward the end of the evening a considerable number of persons had assembled. Among them came also Mr. Evséeff, who had been so harshly abused by Madame Sukhántchikoff: she chatted with

[1] For the instruction in the common branches of workingmen who are occupied on week-days. As religion forms a prominent subject in all school-courses in Russia, Sunday-schools in the Western sense of the word are unnecessary.—TRANSLATOR

him in a very friendly manner, and asked him to escort her home; there came also a certain Pishtchálkin, an ideal arbitrator of the peace,[1] precisely one of those men of whom, possibly, Russia is in need, namely—narrow, badly educated and untalented but conscientious, patient, and honourable; the peasants of his district almost worshipped him, and he treated himself with extreme respect as an individual truly worthy of homage. There came also several young officers who had run off on a brief leave of absence to Europe, and were delighted at the opportunity, cautiously, of course, and without banishing from their minds a mental reservation about the regimental commander, to indulge themselves with clever and rather dangerous people; and two slender young students had run over from Heidelberg: one kept gazing scornfully about him, the other laughed spasmodically . . and both were very ill at ease; after them a Frenchman pushed his way in, a so-called *p'tit jeune homme:* dirty, poor and stupid . . he was famous among his comrades, who were travelling salesmen, because Russian Countesses fell in love with him; but he himself was more intent on a gratuitous supper; last of all, Tit Bindásoff presented himself, with the aspect of a noisy student, but in reality he was a curmudgeon and a crafty fellow, in speech a terror-

[1] An official appointed at the time of the emancipation of the serfs to decide dissensions between them and the landed proprietors arising out of the distribution of the land.—Translator.

ist, by vocation a police-captain, the friend of Russian merchants' wives and of Parisian courtesans, bald, toothless, drunken; he presented himself in a very crimson and evil state, asserting that he had lost his last kopék to that " little rascal Benazet," when, in reality, he had won sixteen gulden. . . In a word, a great many persons assembled. The respect with which all the visitors treated Gubaryóff as a teacher or leader was remarkable—truly remarkable; they expounded to him their doubts, submitted them to his judgment; but he replied . . with a bellow, by tugging at his beard, by rolling his eyes, or by fragmentary, insignificant words, which were immediately caught up on the fly like utterances of the loftiest wisdom. Gubaryóff himself rarely joined in the discussion; on the other hand, the rest zealously strained their chests. It happened more than once that three or four were shouting simultaneously for the course of ten minutes, but every one was satisfied and understood. The conversation lasted until after midnight, and was distinguished, as usual, by the abundance and the variety of subjects. Madame Sukhántchikoff talked about Garibaldi, about some Karl Ivánovitch, who had been flogged by his own house-serfs, about Napoleon III., about female labour, about merchant Pleskatchyóff, who, according to common knowledge, had starved twelve working-girls to

death, and had, on that account, received a medal with the inscription: "For a useful deed"; about the proletariat, about the Georgian Prince Tchuktcheulídzeff, who had fired his wife from a cannon, and about the future of Russia; Pishtchálkin also talked about the future of Russia, about government monopolies, about the significance of nationality, and about his detesting commonplace things most of all; Voroshíloff suddenly broke out: in one breath, and almost choking himself in the process, he mentioned Draper, Virchow, Mr. Shelgunóff, Bichat, Helmholtz, Stahr, Stuhr, Raymond, Johannes Müller the physiologist, Johannes Müller the historian,—evidently confounding them,—Taine, Renan, Mr. Shtchápoff, and then Thomas Nash, Peel, Greene. . . "What sort of birds are these?" muttered Bambáeff in amazement. "The predecessors of Shakespeare, who bear to him the same relation that the ramifications of the Alps bear to Mont Blanc!" replied Voroshíloff cuttingly, and also touched upon the future of Russia. Bambáeff, too, talked about the future of Russia, and even painted it in rainbow-tinted colours, but was raised to special rapture by the thought of Russian music, in which he beheld something "Ukh! great," and in confirmation he struck up a romance by Varlámoff, but was speedily interrupted by a unanimous shout to the effect: "He 's singing the *Miserere* from 'Trovatore,' and singing it very badly at that." One young officer, un-

der cover of the uproar, reviled Russian literature, another quoted verses from the "Spark"; but Tit Bindásoff behaved still more simply: he announced that all those rascals ought to have their teeth knocked out—and enough said! without, however, specifying who those rascals were. The cigar-smoke became stifling; every one was heated and languid, all had grown hoarse, every one's eyes had grown dim, the perspiration was coursing in streams from every face. Bottles of cold beer made their appearance, and were instantly emptied. "What the deuce was it I was saying?" insisted one; "and whom and about what have I just been talking?" inquired another. And in the midst of all this tumult and smoke-laden atmosphere Gubaryóff strode about untiringly, waddling and ruffling his beard as before, now listening, with ear inclined, to some one's argument, again putting in a word of his own, and every one involuntarily felt that he, Gubaryóff, was the matrix of the whole affair, that he was the master and chief personage there. . . .

About ten o'clock Litvínoff's head began to ache violently, and he quietly withdrew, availing himself of a recrudescence of the general clamour: Madame Sukhántchikoff had recalled another piece of injustice on the part of Prince Barnaúloff: he had practically ordered some one's ear to be bitten off.

The fresh night air clung caressingly to Lit-

vínoff's inflamed face, and flowed in a fragrant flood between his parched lips. "What is it?" he said to himself, as he strolled along the dark avenue: "what sort of a thing was it that I was present at? Why did they meet together? Why did they shout and quarrel, why did they get so excited? What 's the use of it all?" Litvínoff shrugged his shoulders, and betook himself to Weber's, picked up a newspaper and ordered an ice. The newspaper discussed the Roman question, and the ice turned out to be bad. He was on the point of going home, when suddenly there stepped up to him a stranger in a broad-brimmed hat, who, remarking in Russian, "I hope I do not disturb you?" seated himself at his little table. Then only did Litvínoff, on gazing more attentively at the stranger, recognise in him the thickset man who had hidden himself in the corner at Gubaryóff's and had scrutinised him with so much attention when the conversation turned on political convictions. During the whole course of the evening that gentleman had not opened his mouth, and now, having seated himself beside Litvínoff and removed his hat, he gazed at him with a friendly and somewhat embarrassed look.

V

"Mr. Gubaryóff, at whose house I had the pleasure of seeing you to-day," he began,—"did not introduce me to you; so, if you will permit me, I will introduce myself: Potúgin, retired court councillor, served in the Ministry of Finance, in St. Petersburg. I hope that you will not think it strange. . I am not generally in the habit of making acquaintance so quickly, . . but with you . . ."

Here Potúgin began to stammer, and asked a waiter to bring him a glass of cherry cordial. "To give me courage," he added, with a smile.

Litvínoff gazed with redoubled attention at this last one of all the new persons with whom it had been his lot to come in contact that day, and immediately said to himself: "This man is not like those others."

And, in fact, he was not. Before him, running his slender fingers along the edge of the table, sat a broad-shouldered man, with an ample body mounted on short legs, a drooping, curly head, very clever and very melancholy little eyes beneath thick eyebrows, a large, regular mouth, poor teeth, and that purely Russian nose to which the name of "potato" has been appropriated;

a man with an awkward and even a rather wild, but assuredly not a commonplace, aspect. He was negligently dressed: an old-fashioned coat sat on him like a bag, and his necktie had got twisted to one side. His sudden confidence not only did not impress Litvínoff as an intrusion, but, on the contrary, secretly flattered him: it was impossible not to perceive that this man was not in the habit of forcing himself upon strangers. He produced a strange impression upon Litvínoff: he evoked in him both respect and sympathy, and a certain involuntary pity.

"So I do not disturb you?" he repeated in a soft, rather hoarse and feeble voice, which suited his whole figure to perfection.

"Certainly not," replied Litvínoff;—"on the contrary, I am very glad."

"Really? Well, then, I am glad too. I have heard a great deal about you; I know what you are occupying yourself with and what your intentions are. 'T is a good occupation. That is the reason you were taciturn to-day, by the way."

"Yes, and it strikes me that you had very little to say also," remarked Litvínoff.

Potúgin sighed.

"The others argued a very great deal, sir. I listened. Well," he added, after a brief pause, and setting his brows in rather comical fashion, —"were you pleased with our babel of an uproar?"

" It was a regular babel. That was extremely well said on your part. I kept wanting to ask those gentlemen why they were making such a fuss."

Again Potúgin sighed.

" That 's precisely the point, that they don't know themselves, sir. In former times people would have expressed themselves about them in this manner: ' They are the blind instruments of the highest aims '; well, but nowadays we employ harsher epithets. And observe that I myself have not the slightest intention of condemning them; I will say more, they are all . . that is, almost all, very fine people. I know a great deal that is good about Madame Sukhántchikoff, for example: she gave her last penny to two poor nieces. Let us assume that the motive there was a desire to show off, to brag, yet you must admit that it was a noteworthy bit of self-sacrifice on the part of a woman who is not wealthy herself! About Mr. Pishtchálkin it is unnecessary to speak: in due time the peasants of his district will infallibly present him with a silver cup in the shape of a watermelon, and possibly a holy image with the picture of his guardian angel, and although he will tell them in his speech of thanks that he does not deserve such an honour, he will be telling an untruth: he does deserve it. Your friend, Mr. Bambáeff, has a splendid heart; it is true that, with him, as with the poet Yazykóff, who, they

say, extolled debauchery while he sat over a book and drank water, enthusiasm is really not directed at anything, but it is enthusiasm, nevertheless; and Mr. Voroshíloff is extremely kind also; he is like all the men of his school, the men of the gilded classes, who seem to be sent expressly as orderlies to science, to civilisation; and he even holds his tongue pompously: but he is so young still! Yes, yes, they are all excellent people, but the sum total is nothing; the provisions are first-class, but the dish is n't fit to put in your mouth!"

Litvínoff listened to Potúgin with increasing amazement: all his ways, all the turns of his deliberate, but self-confident speech, revealed both understanding and the desire to talk.

Potúgin, in fact, both liked and understood how to talk; but, as a man out of whom life had already succeeded in eliminating conceit, he awaited with philosophical composure his opportunity, an encounter after his own heart.

"Yes, yes," he began again, with a humour not sickly, but sad, which was peculiarly characteristic of him:—"all that is very strange, sir. And here is another thing which I will beg you to note. When ten Englishmen, for example, come together, they immediately begin to discuss the submarine telegraph, the tax on paper, the process of dressing rats' skins,—that is to say, something positive, something definite; let ten Germans

come together,—well, there, of course, Schleswig-Holstein and the unity of Germany make their appearance on the scene; if ten Frenchmen assemble the conversation will infallibly touch on 'piquant adventures,' let them evade it as they will; but when ten Russians get together the question instantly arises,—you have had an opportunity to-day of convincing yourself on that point,—the question as to the significance, the future of Russia, and that in just such general terms, beginning with Leda's eggs, insusceptible of proof, without any issue. They chew and chew on that question, as a small child does on a piece of india rubber: there 's no juice or sense in it. Well, and, by the way, of course the rotten West catches it also. A pretty preachment, as you can imagine! it beats us at every point, that West—but it 's rotten! And even if we did really despise it," continued Potúgin:—"nevertheless, all that is mere phrase-making and lies. We certainly do revile it, but its opinion is the only one we value—that is to say, the opinion of Parisian coxcombs. I have an acquaintance, and a very nice sort of man he is, apparently, the father of a family, and no longer young; and that man was in a state of depression for several days because he had ordered *une portion de biftek aux pommes de terre,* while a real Frenchman immediately shouted out: *'Garçon! biftek pommes!'* My friend was consumed with shame! And afterward he

shouted everywhere: *'Biftek pommes!'* and taught others. The very courtesans are astounded at the devout tremor wherewith our young fellows from the steppes enter their ignominious drawing-rooms. . . 'Good heavens!' they say to themselves, 'am I really here? At Annah Deslions!' "

"Please tell me," inquired Litvínoff, "to what do you ascribe the indubitable influence of Gubaryóff on all the people around him? Not to his gifts or to his capacities?"

"No, sir; no, sir; he has nothing of that sort. . ."

"To his character, then?"

"He has not that either, but he has a great deal of will, sir. We Slavonians in general, as is well known, are not rich in that attribute, and we give up in presence of it. Mr. Gubaryóff desired to be a leader, and every one has recognised him as a leader. What would you have done about it? The government has released us from serfdom, and we thank it; but the habits of serfdom have taken too profound a root in us; we shall not soon rid ourselves of them. In everything and everywhere we want a master; this master, in the majority of cases, is a vivacious individual; sometimes some so-called tendency acquires a power over us . . . now, for example, we have all bound ourselves as slaves to the natural sciences. . . Why, by virtue of what reasons, we enroll ourselves as slaves, is an obscure matter; evidently

such is our nature. But the principal point is that we should possess a master. Well, and there we have him; that means he is ours, and we don't care a copper about the rest! Purely bondmen! Both the pride of the bondman and the humiliation of the bondman. A new master has come into existence—away with the old one! The other was named Yákoff, this one is called Sídor; give Yákoff a box on the ears, fall at the feet of Sídor! Recollect how many tricks of that sort have taken place among us! We prattle about renunciation as our distinguishing characteristic; but we do not exercise renunciation like a free man who smites with his sword, but like a lackey, who administers a thrashing with his fist, and, what is more, administers a thrashing at his master's behest. Well, sir, and we are also a soft race; it is not difficult to keep a tight hand over us. And that 's the way Mr. Gubaryóff has come to be a master; he hammered and hammered away at one point until he attained his object. People perceive that a man has a great opinion of himself, believes in himself, issues orders—the principal thing is to issue orders; they conclude that he is right and that he must be obeyed. All our sectarians, our sects of Onúphry and of Akulína,[1] had their origin in

[1] Onúfry—the founder of the priestless sect of the Old Ritualists: born 1829.—Akulína Iványovna was the name of three of the so-called Birthgivers of God (Madonnas) in the Scourgers' and Skóptzy sects. Hence, one heresy received from them the appellation of "Akulínovshtchina."—Translator.

precisely this manner. He who has seized the staff is the commander."

Potúgin's cheeks had flushed crimson and his eyes had grown dim; but, strange to say, his speech, bitter and even malicious though it was, did not smack of gall, but rather of sadness, and upright, genuine sadness at that.

"How did you become acquainted with Gubaryóff?" inquired Litvínoff.

"I have known him for a long time, sir. And observe another queer thing about us: a man—for instance, an author possibly—has been reviling drunkenness all his life, in verse and in prose, and upbraiding . . . and, all of a sudden, he takes and buys two distilleries himself and leases a hundred dram-shops—and it 's nothing! People would wipe another man off the face of the earth, but they do not even reproach him. Now there 's Mr. Gubaryóff: he 's a Slavophil, and a democrat, and a socialist, and anything else you like, but his estate always has been managed and is still managed by his brother, a master of the ancient type, one of the sort who were called 'Danteists.' And that same Madame Sukhántchikoff, who represents Mrs. Beecher Stowe as slapping Tenteléeff's face, almost crawls before Gubaryóff. But, you know, the only thing about him is that he reads clever books and is forever trying to get down into the depths. As to his gift of language, you have been able to judge for yourself to-day;

and thank God, too, that he says but little, and only writhes all the time. Because, when he is in the mood and lets himself go freely, then it is more than even I, a long-suffering man, can tolerate. He begins to banter and to narrate filthy anecdotes,—yes, yes, our great Mr. Gubaryóff narrates filthy anecdotes and laughs so abominably the while . . . ."

"Are you really so long-suffering?" said Litvínoff.—"I should have supposed the contrary. . . . But permit me to inquire, what is your name and your patronymic?"

Potúgin sipped a little of the cherry cordial.

"My name is Sozónt . . Sozónt Iványitch. They gave me that very beautiful name in honour of a relative, an Archimandrite, to whom I am indebted for this alone. I am of the ecclesiastical race, if I may be allowed to express myself thus. And you make a mistake in doubting that I am patient: I am patient. I served for two and twenty years under my uncle, actual state councillor Irinárkh Potúgin. You did not know him?"

"No."

"I congratulate you on that. No, I am patient. But 'let us return to the first point,' as my colleague, the burnt-alive Archpriest Avákkum [1] was accustomed to say. I am amazed, my

[1] Avákkum Petróvitch, an ardent preacher of the doctrines of the Old Ritualists, who refused to accept the corrections (typographical and other) made in the Scriptures and Church Service

dear sir, at my fellow-countrymen. They are all low-spirited, they all go about in a dejected way, and, at the same time, they are all filled with hope, and at the slightest excuse they fairly go mad. Now take the Slavophils, among whom Mr. Gubaryóff reckons himself: they are very fine people, but there 's the same mixture of despair and irritation, and they also live in the future. It 's all coming, it 's coming, they say. There 's nothing in hand at the present moment, and Russia, in the course of ten whole centuries, has never worked out a single thing of her own, neither in government, nor in courts of justice, nor in science, nor in art, nor even in the handicrafts. . . But wait; have patience: everything will come. And why will it come, allow me to inquire? Because, forsooth, we are cultured people,— —stuff and nonsense; but the people . . oh, it 's a grand people! Do you see that peasant coat? that 's what all will proceed from. All the other idols have been smashed; but let us have faith in the peasant coat. Well, and what if the peasant coat betrays you? No, it will not betray; read Madame Kokhanóvsky,[1] and roll your eyes up to the ceiling! Really, if I were an

books in the reign of Peter the Great's father. Avákkum was forced to become a monk, banished to Siberia, brought back to Moscow, imprisoned, and eventually banished again to Pustózersk, Arkhangel Government. For his persistent heretical propaganda he and his companions were burned alive in 1681.—Translator.

[1] Nadézhda Stepánovna Sokhánsky (1825–1884), who wrote under the name of "Kokhanóvsky."—Translator.

artist this is the sort of a picture I would paint: a cultivated man is standing in front of a peasant and bowing low to him: 'Heal me, my dear peasant, says he, 'I am perishing with disease'; but the peasant, in his turn, bows low before the educated man. 'Please teach me, dear master,' says he, 'I am perishing with ignorance.' Well, and of course both of them stick right where they are. But all that is needed is really to become humble, —not in words alone,—and adopt from our elder brothers that which they have invented—better than we and earlier than we! Waiter, another glass of cherry cordial! You must not think that I am a drunkard, but alcohol loosens my tongue."

"After what you have just said," observed Litvínoff, with a smile,—"it is not worth while for me to ask to what party you belong and what opinion you hold concerning Europe. But permit me to make one remark. Here you say that we ought to borrow, to adopt from our elder brothers; but how can we adopt without taking into consideration the conditions of climate and soil, with local and national peculiarities? I remember that my father ordered from Butenop's foundry a splendidly recommended winnowing-machine; the winnowing-machine really was very good. But what happened? For five whole years it stood in the shed utterly useless, until it was replaced by a wooden American machine,—which was much better suited to our manner of life and

to our habits, as American machines are, in general. It is impossible to adopt things at haphazard, Sozónt Ivánitch."

Potúgin raised his head a little.

"I did not expect that sort of retort from you, most respected Grigóry Mikhaílitch," he began, after a brief pause.—"And who forces you to adopt at haphazard? Surely you take a foreign thing not because it is foreign, but because you find it suitable: consequently, you do take the circumstances into consideration, you do make a selection. And so far as the results are concerned, pray do not disturb yourself: they will be original by virtue of precisely those local, climatic and other conditions to which you allude. All you have to do is to offer good food, and the natural stomach will digest it after its own fashion; and, in course of time, when the organism shall have gained strength, it will yield *its own* sap. Just take our language as an example. Peter the Great deluged it with thousands of foreign words —Dutch, French, and German: those words expressed conceptions with which it was necessary to make the Russian nation acquainted; without philosophising, and without standing on ceremony, Peter poured those words wholesale, by the bucketful, by the cask, into our bosom. At first, it is true, the result was something monstrous, but later on—precisely that digestive process set in which I have mentioned to you. The

conceptions became grafted on and appropriated; the foreign forms gradually evaporated; the language found in its own bosom the wherewithal to replace them—and now, your humble servant, a very mediocre master of style, will undertake to translate any page you please from Hegel,—yes, sir; yes, sir; from Hegel,—without making use of a single non-Slavonic word. That which has taken place with the language will, it is to be hoped, take place in other spheres. The whole question lies here—is nature strong? But our nature is all right; it will stand the strain: that 's not where the great difficulty lies. Only nervous invalids and weak nations can fear for their health, for their independence; and just so, only idle people are capable of going into raptures until they foam at the mouth, because, forsooth, we are Russians, say they. I am very solicitous about my health, but I don't go into raptures over it: I 'm ashamed to, sir."

" All that is true, Sozónt Ivánitch," began Litvínoff in his turn:—" but why must we, inevitably, be subjected to such tests? You say yourself that the first result was something monstrous! Well—and what if that monstrous thing had remained monstrous? And it has remained so; you know it has."

" But not in the language—and that means a great deal! But I did not make our nation; I am not to blame if it is fated to pass through such

a school. 'The Germans were developed regularly,' cry the Slavophils: 'give us regular development also!' But where is one to get it when the very first historical action of our tribe—summoning to themselves princes from over-sea—is an irregularity to start with, an anomaly which is repeated in every one of us, down to the present day; every one of us, at least once in his life, has infallibly said to something foreign, non-Russian: 'Come, exercise authority and reign over me!'—I am ready, if you like, to admit that, when we introduce a foreign substance into our own body, we cannot, by any means, know with certainty beforehand what it is we are introducing: a bit of bread or a bit of poison; for, assuredly, it is a familiar fact that you never pass from bad to good through better, but always through worse—and poison is useful in medicine. Only dolts or sharpers can decently point with triumph at the poverty of the peasants after the Emancipation, at their increased drunkenness after the abrogation of the liquor monopoly. . . . Through worse to good!"

Potúgin passed his hand over his face.

"You asked me my opinion concerning Europe," he began again:—"I am amazed at it and devoted to its principles to the last degree, and do not consider it necessary to conceal the fact. For a long time . . no, not for a long time . . for some time past I have ceased to be afraid to

give utterance to my convictions . . . even you, you see, did not hesitate to announce to Gubaryóff your mode of thought. I, thank God, have ceased to conform to the ideas, the views, the habits of the man with whom I am conversing. In reality, I know of nothing worse than that useless cowardice, that base-spirited willingness to please by virtue of which, as you see, one of our grave dignitaries humours some little student who is of no account in his eyes, almost sports with him, runs after him like a hare. Well, let us assume that the dignitary behaves in this manner out of a desire for popularity; but why should plebeians like me shift and shuffle? Yes, sir, yes, sir, I am an Occidentalist, I am devoted to Europe—that is, to speak more accurately, I am devoted to culture, to that same culture at which people so charmingly jeer nowadays in our country,—to civilisation—yes, yes, that word is even better, and I love it with all my heart, and I believe in it, and I have not and never shall have any other faith. That 's the word: ci . . . vi . . . li- . . . sa . . . tion" (Potúgin pronounced each syllable distinctly with emphasis); "it is intelligible, and pure, and holy, but all the others, whether it be nationality, or glory, smell of blood. . . I want nothing to do with them!"

"Well, but, Sozónt Ivánitch, you love Russia, your native land?"

Potúgin passed his hand over his face.

"I love it passionately, and I hate it passionately."

Litvínoff shrugged his shoulders.

"That 's old, Sozónt Ivánitch, that 's a commonplace."

"Well, what of that? What 's the harm? A pretty thing to take fright at!—A commonplace! I know many fine commonplaces! Here now, for example: liberty and order—that 's a familiar commonplace. Is it better, in your opinion, to have, as with us, servility and disorder? And, moreover, are all those phrases wherewith so many young heads become intoxicated: the despised bourgeoisie, *souveraineté du peuple,* the right to labor,—are not they also commonplaces? And how about love, inseparable from hatred? . ."

"Byronism," interrupted Litvínoff:—"romanticism of the '30's."

"You are mistaken, excuse me; Catullus, the Roman poet Catullus, was the first to point out that blending of sentiments, two thousand years ago.[1] I learned that by reading him, because I know something of Latin, in consequence of my ecclesiastical extraction, if I may venture so to express myself. Yes, sir, I both love and hate my Russia, my strange, dear, dreadful, beloved fatherland. Now I have abandoned it; I had to air myself a bit, after sitting for twelve years at

[1] Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse, requiris?
Nescio: sed fieri sentio et excrucior.
Catullus, LXXXVI.

a government desk, in a government building; I have abandoned Russia, and I find it agreeable and jolly here; but I shall soon return, I feel it. Garden soil is good—but cloudberries will not grow on it!"

"You find it pleasant and jolly, and I am at ease here," said Litvínoff.—"And I came hither to study; but that does not prevent my seeing such little pranks as that. . ." He pointed to two passing courtesans, around whom several members of the Jockey Club were grimacing and lisping, and at the gambling-hall, which was packed full, in spite of the late hour.

"But who told you that I was blind to that?" retorted Potúgin.—"Only, pardon me, but your remark reminds me of the triumphant way our unhappy journalists had of pointing, during the Crimean campaign, to the defects of the English military administration, revealed in the *Times*. I am not an optimist myself, and everything that pertains to man, all our life, that entire comedy with a tragic ending, does not present itself to me in a rosy light; but why tax the Occident, in particular, with that which, possibly, has its root in our human essence itself? That gambling-house is repulsive, it is true; well, but is our home-bred knavery, perchance, any the more beautiful? No, my dear Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, let us be more humble and more quiet; a good pupil perceives the errors of his teacher, but he respectfully holds

his peace about them; for those very errors are of service to him, and direct him in the right way. But if you insist upon gossiping about the rotten West, here comes Prince Kokó at a jog-trot; he has, probably, dropped at the gaming-table in a quarter of an hour the toil-won, extorted quit-rents of a hundred and fifty families, his nerves are unstrung, and, moreover, I saw him to-day at Marks's, turning over the pages of Veuillot's pamphlet. . He 'll be a capital companion for you!"

"But pardon me, pardon me," said Litvínoff hastily, perceiving that Potúgin was rising from his seat.—"My acquaintance with Prince Kokó is very slight, and then, of course, I prefer conversation with you. . ."

"I am greatly indebted to you," said Potúgin, rising and bowing his farewell;—"but I have been conversing with you a pretty long time as it is—that is, strictly speaking, I have been doing all the talking myself, while you, probably, have observed from your own experience that a man always feels conscience-stricken somehow and uncomfortable when he has been talking a great deal —all alone. Especially so when it happens at a first meeting: as much as to say, 'Look at me, that 's the sort of man I am!' Farewell until our next pleasant meeting. . . And I, I repeat it, am very glad at having made your acquaintance."

"But wait a bit, Sozónt Ivánitch; tell me, at

least, where you are living, and whether you intend to remain here long."

Potúgin seemed to wince a little.

"I shall remain about a week longer in Baden, but we can meet each other here, or at Weber's, or at Marks's. Or I will go to you."

"Nevertheless, I must know your address."

"Yes. But this is the point: I am not alone."

"You are married?" asked Litvínoff abruptly.

"Good gracious, no. . . Why talk so absurdly? . . But I have a young girl with me."

"Ah!" ejaculated Litvínoff, with a shrug, as though apologising, and dropped his eyes.

"She is only six years old," went on Potúgin. —"She is an orphan, . . the daughter of a lady . . of one of my good friends. Really, we had better meet here. Good-bye, sir."

He pulled his hat down over his curly head and walked rapidly away, appearing for an instant a couple of times under the gas-jets, which cast a rather scanty light upon the road which led to Lichtenthal Avenue.

VI

"A STRANGE man!" said Litvínoff to himself, as he wended his way to the hotel where he was stopping: "a strange man! I must hunt him up." He entered his room; a letter on the table caught his eye. "Ah! from Tánya!" he thought, and rejoiced in advance; but the letter was from his father in the country. Litvínoff broke the large heraldic seal and was about to begin reading. . A powerful, very agreeable, and familiar odour attracted his attention. He glanced about him, and perceived on the window-sill, in a glass of water, a large bouquet of fresh heliotropes. Litvínoff bent over them, not without surprise, touched them, smelled them. . . Some memory seemed to recur to him, something very remote, . . but precisely what he could not imagine. He rang for a servant and asked him whence the flowers had come. The servant replied that they had been brought by a lady, who would not give her name, but had said that he, "Herr Zluitenhoff," would be sure to divine who she was from the flowers themselves. . . Again Litvínoff caught a glimpse of some memory. . . He asked the servant what was the appearance of the lady? The servant ex-

plained that she was tall and very well dressed, but wore a veil over her face.

" Probably a Russian Countess," he added.

" Why do you assume that? " inquired Litvínoff.

" She gave me two gulden," replied the servant, with a grin.

Litvínoff sent him away, and for a long time thereafter stood before the window immersed in thought; but at last he waved his hand in despair, and again took up the letter from the country. In it his father poured forth his habitual complaints, asserted that no one would take the grain even as a gift, that the people had grown utterly unruly, and that, in all probability, the end of the world was at hand. " Just imagine," he wrote, by the way, " my last coachman, that little Kalmýk, you remember? has been bewitched, and the man would infallibly have perished and there would have been no one to drive me, but, luckily, some kind people gave me a hint and advised me to send the sick man off to Ryazán, to a priest who is a well-known expert in dealing with spells; and the treatment actually succeeded to perfection, in confirmation whereof I enclose the letter of the father himself, by way of document." Litvínoff ran his eye over this " document " with curiosity. It contained the statement that " the house-servant, Nikanór Dmítrieff, was afflicted with a malady which medical science could not reach;

and this malady was caused by malevolent persons; but the cause of it was Nikanór himself, for he had not fulfilled his promise to a certain maiden, hence she, through these persons, had rendered him unfit for anything, and if I had not been his helper, under these circumstances he must have perished utterly, like a cabbage-worm; but I, trusting in the All-seeing Eye, constituted myself his prop in life; and how I accomplished this is a secret; and I request Your Well-Born that henceforth that maiden may not occupy herself with those evil attributes, and it would even do no harm to threaten her, otherwise she may exercise a maleficent influence over him again." Litvínoff fell into thought over this document; it exhaled upon him a breath of the wilds of the steppe, the impassive gloom of stagnating life, and it seemed marvellous to him that he should have read that letter precisely in Baden. In the meantime, midnight had long since struck; Litvínoff went to bed and blew out his candle. But he could not get to sleep; the faces he had seen, the speeches he had heard, kept whirling and circling, strangely interweaving and mixing themselves in his burning head, which was aching with the tobacco-smoke. Now he seemed to hear Gubaryóff's bellow, and his downcast eyes, with their stupid, obstinate gaze, presented themselves; then, all of a sudden, those same eyes began to blaze and leap, and he recognised

Madame Sukhántchikoff, heard her sharp voice, and, involuntarily, in a whisper, repeated after her: "She did slap his face, she did!" then the shambling figure of Potúgin moved forward before him, and for the tenth, the twentieth time, he recalled his every word; then, like a puppet from a snuff-box, Voroshíloff sprang forward in his brand-new paletot, which fitted him like a new uniform, and Pishtchálkin wisely and gravely nodded his capitally-barbered and really well-intentioned head; and Bindásoff bawled and reviled, and Bambáeff went into tearful raptures. . . . But the chief thing was: that perfume, that importunate, insistent, sweet, heavy perfume, gave him no rest, and was exhaled with ever-increasing power in the darkness, and ever more persistently reminded him of something which he vainly endeavoured to grasp. . . It occurred to Litvínoff that the odour of flowers was injurious to the health at night in a bed-chamber, and he rose, felt his way to the bouquet, and carried it out into the adjoining room; but the insufferable fragrance penetrated to his pillow, under his coverlet, even from that point, and he tossed sadly from side to side. Fever was beginning to lay hold upon him; the priest, "the expert in dealing with spells," had already twice run across his path in the shape of a very nimble hare with a beard, and Voroshíloff, squatting in a General's plume, as in a bush, was beginning to trill

like a nightingale before him . . . when, all of a sudden, he sat up in bed, and clasping his hands, exclaimed: "Is it possible that it is *she?* It cannot be!"

But in order to explain this exclamation of Litvínoff, we must ask the indulgent reader to go back several years with us.

VII

At the beginning of the '50's there resided in Moscow, in very straitened circumstances, almost in poverty, the numerous family of the Princes Osínin. They were genuine, not Tatár-Georgian, but pure-blooded princes, descendants of Rúrik; their name is frequently met with in our Chronicles under the first Grand Princes of Moscow, the collectors of the Russian land; they possessed extensive patrimonial estates and domains, had been repeatedly rewarded for "toils, and blood, and wounds," had sat in the Council of the boyárs; one of them even wrote his name with "vitch"; [1] but had fallen into disgrace through the conspiracy of enemies for "witchcraft and knowledge of roots"; they were ruined "terribly and completely"; they were deprived of their honours, and banished to parts remote; the Osínins crumbled away, and never recovered themselves, never again attained to power; the decree of banishment was removed from them, in course of time, and their "Moscow homestead" and their "chattels" were even restored to them, but nothing was of any avail. Their race had become im-

[1] Formerly a sign of blood-royal.—Translator.

poverished, had " withered away "—it did not rise either under Peter or under Katherine, and becoming constantly more insignificant and reduced, it counted among its members private stewards, managers of liquor counting-houses, and police-captains. The family of the Osínins to which we have alluded consisted of husband, wife and five children. They lived near the Dogs' Square, in a tiny, one-story wooden house, with a striped principal porch opening on the street, green lions on the gates, and other devices appertaining to the nobility, and barely made the two ends meet, running into debt at the greengrocer's shop, and frequently going without fuel and lights in winter. The Prince himself was an indolent, rather stupid man, who had, once upon a time, been a handsome man and a dandy, but had utterly gone to pieces; not so much out of respect for his name, as out of courtesy to his wife, who had been a Maid of Honour at Court, he had been given one of the ancient Moscow posts with a small salary, a difficult title, and no work whatever; he never meddled with anything, and did nothing but smoke from morning till night, never abandoning his dressing-gown, and sighing heavily. His wife was a sickly and peevish woman, perpetually worried over domestic troubles, with getting her children placed in government institutions for education, and with keeping up her connections in St. Petersburg; she never could

get reconciled to her position and expatriation from the Court.

Litvínoff's father, during his sojourn in Moscow, had made the acquaintance of the Osínins, had had an opportunity to render them several services, had once lent them three hundred rubles; and his son, in his student days, had frequently called to inquire after their health, as his lodgings chanced to be situated not very far from their house. But it was not the close vicinity which attracted him, neither did the wretched comforts of their mode of life allure him: he began to visit the Osínins frequently from the moment when he fell in love with their eldest daughter, Irína.

At that time she had just passed her seventeenth birthday; she had just left the Institute, from which her mother had taken her, on account of a quarrel with the directress. The quarrel had arisen from the circumstance that Irína was to have delivered the verses of greeting to the Curator at the commencement in the French language, and just before the ceremony another girl, the daughter of a very wealthy government monopolist, had been substituted for her. The Princess-mother could not digest this affront; and Irína herself could not forgive the directress for her injustice; she had been dreaming in advance how, in the sight of every one, attracting universal attention, she would declaim her speech, and how Moscow would talk about her afterward. . . And,

in fact, Moscow probably would have talked about Irína. She was a tall, slender girl, with a somewhat sunken chest and narrow, youthful shoulders, with a palely-opaque skin rare at her age, as pure and smooth as porcelain, and thick, blond hair, wherein dark locks were intermingled with the blond ones in an original manner. Her features, elegantly, almost exquisitely regular, had not yet lost that innocent expression which is peculiar to early youth; but in the slow inclinations of her beautiful neck, in her smile, which, not exactly abstracted, nor yet exactly languid, denoted the nervous young gentlewoman, and in the very outline of those thin, barely smiling lips, of that small, aquiline, somewhat compressed nose, there was something wilful and passionate, something dangerous both for others and for herself. Her eyes were astounding, truly astounding, of a blackish-grey, with green lights, languishing, long as those of Egyptian divinities, with radiant eyelashes, and a bold sweep of eyebrows. There was a strange expression in those eyes: they seemed to be gazing, gazing attentively and thoughtfully, from out of some unknown depths and distance. In the Institute Irína had borne the reputation of being one of the best scholars as to mind and capacities, but with an unstable, ambitious character, and a mischievous head; one of the teachers had predicted to her that her passions would ruin her—*"Vos passions vous perdront";*

on the other hand, another teacher had persecuted her because of her coldness and lack of feeling, and called her "*une jeune fille sans cœur.*" Irína's companions thought her proud and deceitful, her brothers and sisters were afraid of her, her mother did not trust her, and her father felt uneasy when she fixed her mysterious eyes upon him; but she inspired both father and mother with a sentiment of involuntary respect, not by virtue of her qualities, but by virtue of the peculiar, indistinct expectations which she aroused in them, God knows why.

"You will see, Praskóvya Danílovna," said the old Prince one day, taking his pipe-stem out of his mouth:—"Arínka will extricate us from our difficulties yet."

The Princess flew into a rage, and told her husband that he used "*expressions insupportables,*" but thought better of it afterward, and repeated, between her teeth: "Yes . . . and it would be a good thing if she did extricate us."

Irína enjoyed almost unbounded freedom in the parental abode; they did not pet her, they even held rather aloof from her, but they did not oppose her: that was all she wanted. . . . It sometimes happened when there was some quite too humiliating scene—when a shopkeeper would come and yell, so that the whole house could hear him, that he was tired of haunting them for his money, or when their servants, whom they owned,

took to abusing their masters to their face, saying, "A pretty sort of princes you are, with not a copper in your purse to keep from starving"—that Irína would never move a muscle, but would sit motionless, with a malign smile on her gloomy face; and that smile alone was more bitter to her parents than all reproaches, and they felt themselves guilty, innocently guilty, in the presence of that being, who seemed, from her very birth, to have been endowed with the right to wealth, to luxury, to adoration.

Litvínoff fell in love with Irína as soon as he saw her (he was only three years older than she), but for a long time he could not win reciprocity or even attention. Upon her treatment of him there lay the imprint even of a certain hostility; it was exactly as though he had offended her and she were profoundly concealing the offence, but were unable to forgive him. He was too young and modest at that time to understand what might be concealed beneath this hostile, almost scornful harshness. There were times when, oblivious of lectures and note-books, he would sit in the Osínins' cheerless drawing-room,—sit and stare covertly at Irína: his heart pined slowly and bitterly away within him and oppressed his breast; but she, as though she were angry or bored, would rise, pace up and down the room, gaze coldly at him, as at a table or a chair, shrug her shoulders, and fold her arms; or, during the whole course of

the evening, she would deliberately refrain from glancing at Litvínoff a single time, even when talking with him, as though refusing him even that alms; or, in conclusion, she would take up a book and rivet her eyes upon it, without reading, frown and bite her lips, or would suddenly inquire of her father or brother: what was the German word for patience?

He tried to tear himself away from the enchanted circle, in which he incessantly suffered torment and struggled, like a bird which has fallen into a trap; he absented himself from Moscow for a week. After nearly losing his mind with grief and irksomeness, he returned to the Osínins, all haggard and ill. . . And, strange to say, Irína also had grown emaciated during those days, her face had turned yellow, her cheeks were sunken; . . . but she greeted him with greater coldness than ever, with almost malevolent scorn, as though he had still further aggravated that mysterious grievance which he had dealt her. . .

She tortured him in this manner for two months; then one day everything underwent a change. It was as though she had broken out in conflagration, as though love had swooped down upon her like a thunder-cloud. One day—he long remembered that day—he was again sitting in the Osínins' drawing-room, at the window, and irrelevantly staring into the street, and he was feeling vexed and bored and despised himself, and yet he

could not stir from the spot. . . It seemed to him as though, if a river were flowing just there, beneath the window, he would hurl her into it with terror, but without compunction. Irína had placed herself not far from him, maintained a rather singular silence, and remained motionless. For several days past she had not spoken to him at all, and indeed she had not spoken to any one; she sat on and on, propped up on her arms, as though she found herself perplexed, and only from time to time did she cast a slow glance around her.

This cold torment became, at last, more than Litvínoff could endure; he rose, and, without taking leave, began to look for his hat. "Wait," a soft whisper suddenly made itself heard. Litvínoff's heart quivered; he did not at once recognise Irína's voice: something unprecedented resounded in that single word. He raised his head and stood petrified: Irína was gazing at him affectionately—yes, affectionately. Comprehending nothing, not fully conscious of what he was doing, he approached her and stretched out his hands. . . She immediately gave him both of hers, then smiled, flushed all over, turned away, and without ceasing to smile, she left the room. . . . A few minutes later she returned in company with her younger sister, again looked at him with the same gentle glance, and made him sit down beside her. . . At first she could say nothing: she merely sighed and

blushed; then she began, as though overcome with timidity, to question him concerning his occupations, something which she had never done before. On the evening of that same day she several times endeavoured to excuse herself to him for not having known how to appreciate him up to that moment, assured him that she had now become an entirely different person, amazed him by an unexpected republican sally (at that time he worshipped Robespierre, and dared not condemn Marat aloud), but a week later he had already discovered that she had fallen in love with him. Yes; he long remembered that first day; . . . but he did not forget the following ones, either,—those days when, still striving to doubt, and afraid to believe, he clearly perceived, with tremors of rapture, almost of terror, how this unexpected happiness was engendered, grew and, irresistibly sweeping everything before it, at last fairly submerged him.

The luminous moments of first love ensued—moments which are not fated to be, and should not be, repeated in one and the same life. Irína suddenly became as tame as a lamb, as soft as silk, and infinitely kind; she undertook to give lessons to her younger sisters,—not on the piano,—she was not a musician,—but in the French and English languages; she read with them from their text-books, she took part in the housekeeping; everything amused her, everything interested her;

now she chattered incessantly, again she became immersed in dumb emotion; she concocted various plans, she entered into interminable speculations as to what she would do when she married Litvínoff (they had not the slightest doubt that their marriage would take place), what they would do together. . . "Work?" suggested Litvínoff. .

"Yes, work," repeated Irína: "read . . . but, principally, travel." She was particularly desirous of quitting Moscow as speedily as possible, and when Litvínoff represented to her that he had not yet completed his course in the university, on each such occasion, after meditating a little, she replied that he might finish his studies in Berlin, or . . . somewhere there. Irína put little constraint upon herself in the expression of her feelings, and, therefore, her affection for Litvínoff did not long remain a secret to the Prince and Princess. They were not precisely delighted, but, taking all the circumstances into consideration, they did not consider it necessary to impose their veto immediately. Litvínoff's property was considerable. . . . . "But family, family! . . ." remarked the Princess. "Well, of course, family," replied the Prince; "but, at all events, he 's not a plebeian, and that 's the chief thing; for Irína will not listen to us. Was there ever a case when she did not do as she pleased? *Vous connaissez sa violence!* Moreover, there 's nothing definite as yet." Thus reasoned the Prince, and

yet, on the instant, added mentally: "Madame Litvínoff—nothing more? I expected something else."

Irína took complete possession of her future betrothed, and he himself willingly gave himself into her hands. He seemed to have fallen into a whirlpool, to have lost himself. . . And he found it painful and sweet, and he regretted nothing and kept back nothing. He could not make up his mind to reflect upon the significance, the duties of wedlock, or whether he, so irrevocably submissive, would make a good husband, and what sort of a wife Irína would turn out to be; his blood was on fire and he knew one thing only: to go after her, with her, onward and without end, and then let that happen which might! But, despite the absence of all opposition on the part of Litvínoff to the superabundance of impulsive tenderness on the part of Irína, matters did not progress without several misunderstandings and clashes. One day he ran in to see her straight from the university, in his old coat, with his hands stained with ink. She rushed to meet him with her customary affectionate greeting, and suddenly came to a halt:

"You have no gloves," she said slowly, with pauses, and instantly added:—"Fie! what a . . . student . . . you are!"

"You are too impressionable, Irína," remarked Litvínoff.

" You are . . a regular student," she repeated: —*" Vous n' êtes pas distingué."*

And turning her back on him, she left the room. It is true that, an hour later, she entreated him to forgive her. . . On the whole, she willingly punished herself and asked his pardon; only, strange to say, she often, almost with tears, accused herself of bad motives which she did not have, and obstinately denied her real defects. On another occasion he found her in tears, with her head resting on her hands, and her hair falling unbound; and when, thoroughly disquieted, he questioned her as to the cause of her grief, she silently pointed her finger at her breast. Litvínoff involuntarily shuddered. " Consumption! " flashed through his mind, and he seized her hand.

" Art thou ill? " he ejaculated with a quivering voice (they had already begun, in important cases, to call each other " thou ").—" If so, I will go at once for the doctor . . ."

But Irína did not allow him to finish, and stamped her little foot with impatience.

" I am perfectly well . . but it is this gown . . . don't you understand? "

" What do you mean? . . this gown . . ." he ejaculated in surprise.

" What do I mean? Why, that I have no other, and that it is old, horrid, and that I am compelled to put on this gown every day . . even when thou . . even when you come. . It

will end in thy ceasing to love me, if thou seest me so slovenly."

"Good heavens, Irína, what art thou saying? Why, this gown is very pretty. . . And it is dear to me, moreover, because I saw thee in it for the first time."

Irína blushed.

"Please do not remind me, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, that even then I had no other gown."

"But I assure you, Irína Pávlovna, it is charmingly becoming to you."

"No, it 's horrid, horrid," she repeated, tugging nervously at her long, soft curls.—"Okh, this poverty, poverty, obscurity! How can I rid myself of this poverty? How get out, get out of the obscurity?"

Litvínoff did not know what to say, and slightly turned away.

Suddenly Irína sprang up from her chair and laid both her hands on his shoulders.

"But, surely, thou lovest me? Thou lovest me?" she cried, approaching her face to his, and her eyes, still filled with tears, beamed with the joy of happiness.—"Thou lovest me even in this horrid gown?"

Litvínoff flung himself on his knees before her.

"Akh, love me, love me, my dear one, my saviour," she whispered, bending down to him.

Thus the days rushed on, the weeks elapsed, and although no formal explanation had as yet taken

place, although Litvínoff still delayed his demand, not, of course, by his own wish, but in expectation of a command from Irína (she had happened one day to remark, " We are both ridiculously young; we must add a few weeks more to our age "), yet everything was moving onward to a conclusion, and the immediate future was becoming more and more clearly defined, when suddenly an event occurred which scattered all these surmises and plans like the light dust of the highway.

VIII

That winter the Court visited Moscow. One festival followed another; then came the turn of the customary great ball in the Assembly of the Nobility. The news of this ball, it is true, penetrated even to the tiny house on the Dogs' Square, in the shape of an announcement in the *Police News*. The Prince was the first to take the initiative; he immediately decided that it was indispensable that they should go and take Irína, that it was unpardonable to miss the opportunity of seeing their sovereigns, that the ancient nobility were, in a manner, bound to do so. He insisted on his opinion with a peculiar warmth, which was not characteristic of him; the Princess agreed with him to a certain extent, and only sighed over the expense; but Irína displayed decided opposition. "It is unnecessary; I will not go," she replied to all the arguments of her parents. Her obstinacy assumed such proportions that the old Prince at last decided to ask Litvínoff to try to persuade her by representing to her, among the other "reasons," that it was improper for a young girl to avoid society, that it was proper for her "to test that," that, as it was, no one ever saw her any-

where. Litvínoff undertook to present these "reasons" to her. Irína gazed at him so intently and attentively that he grew confused, and toying with the ends of her sash, she calmly said:

"You desire this?—you?"

"Yes . . . I think I do," replied Litvínoff faltering.—"I agree with your father. . . And why should not you go . . . to look at the people and to show yourself?" he added, with a curt laugh.

"To show myself," she slowly repeated.—"Well, very good, I will go. . . Only, remember, it is you yourself who have willed it. ."

"That is to say, I . . ." Litvínoff tried to begin.

"It is you yourself who have willed it," she interrupted.—"And there is one more condition: you must promise me that you will not be present at that ball."

"But why?"

"I wish it."

Litvínoff flung his hands apart.

"I submit; . . but, I must confess, I should be very happy to see you in all your majesty, to be a witness of the impression which you will infallibly produce. . How proud I should be of you!" he added, with a sigh.

Irína laughed.

"All that magnificence will consist of a white

frock; and as for the impression . . . well, in short, I will have it so."

"Irína, you seem to be angry?"

Irína laughed again.

"Oh, no! I am not angry. Only thou . . ." (She fixed her eyes upon him, and it struck him that never before had he beheld in them such an expression.) "Perhaps it is necessary," she added in a low voice.

"But, Irína, thou lovest me?"

"Yes, I love thee," she replied, with almost solemn impressiveness, and shook his hand in masculine fashion.

During all the succeeding days Irína sedulously occupied herself with her toilet, with her coiffure; on the eve of the ball she felt indisposed, could not sit still in one place, fell to weeping a couple of times when she was alone: in Litvínoff's presence she smiled in a monotonous sort of way . . . but treated him tenderly, as before, yet in an abstracted manner, and kept incessantly contemplating herself in the mirror. On the day of the ball she was extremely taciturn and pale, but composed. At nine o'clock in the evening Litvínoff came to take a look at her. When she came out to him in her white tarlatan frock, with a spray of small blue flowers in her hair, which was dressed rather high, he simply cried out in admiration: she seemed to him beautiful and majestic beyond her years. "Yes, she has grown

taller since morning," he said to himself; "and what a carriage! What a thing good blood is!" Irína stood before him with pendent arms, without smile or affectation, and gazed with decision, almost with boldness, not at him, but at some point in the distance, straight in front of her.

"You are like a fairy princess," uttered Litvínoff at last;—"or, no: you are like the leader of an army before a victory. . . You have not permitted me to go to this ball,"—he continued, while she remained motionless, as before, and seemed not so much to be listening to him as to some other inward speech;—"but you will not refuse to accept from me these flowers, and to carry them?"

He gave her a bouquet of heliotropes.

She cast a quick glance at Litvínoff, stretched out her hand, and suddenly grasping the tips of the spray which adorned her head, she said:

"Do you wish it? Only say the word, and I will tear off all this and remain at home."

Litvínoff's heart fairly sang with joy. Irína's hand was already wrenching off the spray. . .

"No, no, why should you?" he said hastily, in a burst of grateful and noble sentiments;—"I am not an egoist; why should I restrict your liberty . . when I know that your heart . . ."

"Well, then, don't come near me; you will crush my gown," she said hastily.

Litvínoff was disconcerted.

"And you will take the bouquet?" he asked.

"Of course; it is very pretty, and I am very fond of that perfume. . *Merci.* . I will preserve it as a souvenir."

"Of your first appearance in society," remarked Litvínoff:—"of your first triumph. . ."

Irína contemplated herself in the mirror over her shoulder, bending her body a little.

"And am I really so pretty? Are not you a partial judge?"

Litvínoff grew diffuse in enthusiastic praises. But Irína was no longer listening to him, and lifting the bouquet to her face, she again began to gaze off into the distance with her strange eyes, which seemed to darken and widen, and the ends of the delicate ribbons, set in motion by a light current of air, elevated themselves on her shoulders like wings.

The Prince made his appearance with hair curled, in a white necktie, a shabby black dress suit, and with the Vladímir ribbon of the order of the nobility in his buttonhole; after him the Princess appeared in a chiné silk gown of antique cut, and with that grim anxiety beneath which mothers strive to conceal their agitation put her daughter to rights from behind—that is to say, she shook out the folds of her gown without any necessity whatever. An old-fashioned, four-seated hired carriage, drawn by two shaggy nags, crawled up to the entrance, its wheels creaking over the mounds of snow which had not been

swept away, and an infirm footman in a preposterous livery ran in from the anteroom and rather desperately announced that the carriage was ready. . . After bestowing their blessing for the night upon the remaining children, and donning fur wraps, the Prince and Princess directed their steps to the porch; Irína, in a thin, short-sleeved cloak—how she did hate that cloak!—followed them in silence. Litvínoff escorted them, in the hope of receiving a parting glance from Irína, but she took her seat in the carriage without turning her head.

About midnight he passed under the windows of the Assembly. The innumerable lights in the huge chandeliers pierced through the crimson curtains in luminous spots, and the sounds of a Strauss waltz were being wafted, with a haughty, festive challenge, all over the square encumbered with equipages.

On the following day, at noon, Litvínoff betook himself to the Osínins. He found no one at home but the Prince, who immediately announced to him that Irína had a headache, that she was in bed, and would not rise until the evening, and that, moreover, such an indisposition was not in the least surprising after a first ball.

"*C'est très naturel, vous savez, dans les jeunes filles,*" he added in French, which somewhat amazed Litvínoff, who noticed, at the same moment, that the Prince was not wearing his dress-

ing-gown as usual, but a frock-coat.—"And, moreover," went on Osínin, "how could she help falling ill after the events of last night?"

"The events?" blurted out Litvínoff.

"Yes, yes, the events, the events, *vrais événements.* You cannot imagine, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, *quel succès elle a eu!* The entire Court noticed her! Prince Alexander Feódorovitch said that her place was not here, that she reminded him of the Duchess of Devonshire . . well, you know . . the famous one. . . And old Blazenkampf declared, in the hearing of every one, that Irína was *la reine du bal,* and asked to be presented to her; and he introduced himself to me —that is to say, he told me that he remembered me as a hussar, and inquired where I was serving now. He 's very amusing, that Count, and such an *adorateur du beau sexe!* But what am I saying? . . . And my Princess also . . . . they gave her no peace either: Natálya Nikítishna herself conversed with her . . . what more would you have? Irína danced *avec tous les meilleurs cavaliers;* they kept introducing them and introducing them to me . . . . . until I lost count of them. Will you believe it, everybody thronged around us in crowds; in the mazurka they did nothing but choose her. One foreign diplomat, on learning that she was a native of Moscow, said to the Emperor: '*Sire,*' said he,—'*décidément c'est Moscou qui est le centre de votre empire!*'

and another diplomat added:—'*C'est une vraie révolution, Sire*'; revelation or revolution . . . . something of that sort. Yes . . . yes . . . it . . . it . . . I must tell you, it was something remarkable."

"Well, and Irína Pávlovna herself?" inquired Litvínoff, whose feet and hands had turned cold during the Prince's speech:—" did she enjoy herself, did she seem pleased?"

" Of course she enjoyed herself; as if she could help being pleased! However, you know, one cannot make her out immediately. Every one said to me last night: 'How amazing! *jamais on ne dirait que mademoiselle votre fille est à son premier bal.*' Count Reisenbach, among the rest; . . . surely you must know him. . ."

" No, I do not know him at all, and never have known him."

" He 's my wife's first cousin. . ."

" I do not know him."

" He 's a rich man, a Court Chamberlain; he lives in Petersburg; he 's all the fashion; he twists everybody in Livonia round his finger. Up to now he has always despised us; . . . naturally, I do not bear him any grudge for that. *J'ai l'humeur facile, comme vous savez.* Well, now there was he. He sat down beside Irína, conversed with her for a quarter of an hour, no more, and then said to my Princess: '*Ma cousine,*' says he, '*votre fille est une perle; c'est une perfection;*

every one is complimenting me on my niece. . . .' And then I saw that he went up to . . an important personage, and kept staring at Irína all the while . . . well, and the personage stared also. . . ."

" And so Irína Pávlovna will not be visible all day?" inquired Litvínoff again.

" No; she has a very bad headache. She asked to be remembered to you, and that we should thank you for your bouquet, *qu'on a trouvé charmant.* She must rest. . . My Princess has gone out to pay calls . . and I myself, you see . . . ."

The Prince coughed and began to shuffle his feet about, as though at a loss what more to say. Litvínoff took his hat, said that he had no intention of embarrassing him, and would call later to inquire after his health, and took his departure.

A few paces from the Osínins' house he caught sight of a dandified two-seated carriage, which had halted in front of the police sentry-box. A liveried footman, also dandified, was bending carelessly down from the box and inquiring of the sentry, who was a Finn, whereabouts in the vicinity dwelt Prince Pável Vasílievitch Osínin. Litvínoff glanced into the carriage: in it sat a middle-aged man, of sanguine complexion, with a frowning and haughty face, a Grecian nose, and evil lips, enveloped in a sable cloak,—a high dignitary, by all the signs.

IX

Litvínoff did not keep his promise to call later; he rêflected that it would be better to defer his visit until the following day. When, about twelve o'clock, he entered the familiar drawing-room, he found there the two younger Princesses, Victorínka and Cleopátrinka. He greeted them, then inquired: was Irína Pávlovna feeling any better, and could he see her?

"Irínotchka has gone out wiv mamma," replied Victorínka; although she lisped, she was more vivacious than her sister.

"What . . . she has gone out?" repeated Litvínoff, and something shivered within him in the depths of his breast.—"Does n't . . . does n't . . . does n't she occupy herself with you at this hour—does n't she give you lessons?"

"Irínotchka ith n't going to give us lethonth any more," replied Victorínka.—"She is n't going to any more," Cleopátrinka repeated after her.

"And is your papa at home?" inquired Litvínoff.

"Papa ith n't at home, eiver," continued Victorínka;—"and Irínotchka is ill: she cwied, cwied all night long. . ."

" She cried? "

" Yeth, she cwied. . . Egórovna told me, and her eyes are so wed, as though they were swol—len. . ."

Litvínoff paced up and down the room a couple of times, shivering slightly, as though with cold, and returned to his lodgings. He experienced a sensation akin to that which takes possession of a man when he gazes down from the summit of a lofty tower: everything died away within him, and his head swam quietly and mawkishly. Dull surprise and a mouse-like scampering of thoughts, ill-defined alarm and dumb anticipation, and strange, almost malicious curiosity, in his compressed throat the bitterness of unshed tears, on his lips the effort at an empty smirk, and an entreaty addressed to no one . . oh, how cruel and humiliatingly repulsive it all was! " Irína does not wish to see me," kept whirling incessantly through his brain, " that is clear; but why? What can have taken place at that ill-starred ball? And how is such a change, all at once, possible? So suddenly. . ." (People are constantly observing that death comes unexpectedly, but they cannot possibly accustom themselves to its suddenness, and think it senseless.) —" She sends me no message, she does not wish to come to an explanation with me. . . ."

"Grigóry Mikhaílovitch," cried a strained voice in his very ear.

Litvínoff started, and beheld before him his man with a note in his hand. He recognised Irína's handwriting. . . Even before he had broken the seal of the note he had a foreboding of misfortune, and bowed his head upon his breast and hunched up his shoulders, as though warding off a blow.

At last he summoned his courage and tore off the envelope with one movement. On a small sheet of note-paper stood the following words:

"Forgive me, Grigóry Mikhaílitch. Everything is at an end between us. I am going to Petersburg. It distresses me dreadfully, but the deed is done. Evidently, it is my fate; . . but no, I will not try to justify myself. My forebodings have been realised. Forgive me, forget me; I am not worthy of you.

"Be magnanimous: do not try to see me.

"Irína."

Litvínoff read these five lines and sank back slowly on the couch, as though some one had dealt him a blow in the breast. He dropped the note, picked it up, read it again, whispered, "To Petersburg," dropped it again, and that was all. Tranquillity descended upon him; he even adjusted the cushion under his head with his hands, which were thrown behind him. "Those who are wounded unto death do not toss about," he said to himself; "as it has come, so it has gone. . . All this is natural; I have always expected this. . ."

(He lied to himself: he had never expected anything of the sort.) "Wept? She wept?.. What did she weep about? For she did not love me! However, it is all comprehensible and in consonance with her character. She, she is not worthy of me. . . The idea!" (He laughed bitterly.) "She herself did not know what force was concealed within her; well, but after convincing herself of its effects at the ball, how could she put up with an insignificant student? . . . It is all intelligible enough."

But here he recalled her tender words, her smiles, and those eyes—those unforgettable eyes, which he would never see again, which both beamed and melted at the mere encounter with his eyes; he recalled also one swift, timid, burning kiss—and all of a sudden he burst out sobbing, and sobbed convulsively, wildly, venomously, turned over on his face, and choked, and sighed with fierce enjoyment, as though thirsting to rend himself and everything about him, thrust his inflamed face into the cushion of the divan and bit it. . .

Alas! The gentleman whom Litvínoff had seen on the previous day in the carriage was precisely that first cousin of the Princess Osínin, the wealthy man and Chamberlain of the Court, Count Reisenbach. On perceiving the impression which Irína had made on persons of the highest position, and instantaneously calculating what

advantages, "*mit etwas Accuratesse,*" might be derived from that fact, the Count, being an energetic man and one who understood how to render obsequious service, immediately drew up his plan. He decided to act promptly, in Napoleonic fashion. "I will take that original young girl into my own house," he reflected; "in Petersburg I will make her my heiress, devil take it, well, of almost all my estate; I happen to have no children; she is my niece, and my Countess finds life tiresome alone. . . At any rate, it will be more agreeable when there is a pretty little face in the drawing-room. . . Yes, yes; that 's so: *es ist eine Idee, es ist eine Idee!*" He must dazzle, confuse, startle her parents.—"They have nothing to eat," the Count pursued his meditations, as he sat in his carriage and was being driven to the Dogs' Square, "therefore, in all probability, they will not prove obstinate. They 're not so very sensitive. I might give them a sum of money. But she? And she will consent also. Honey is sweet . . . she got a taste of it last night. It is a caprice of mine, let us assume; then let them profit by it . . . the fools. I shall say to them: thus and so; come to a decision. Otherwise, I shall take some other girl; an orphan—which is more convenient. Yes or no, I give you twenty-four hours to make up your minds, *und damit Punctum.*"

With these same words upon his lips, the Count presented himself before the Prince, whom he had

already, on the previous evening at the ball, forewarned of his visit. It seems not worth while to enter at length into the results of this visit. The Count had made no mistake in his calculations: the Prince and Princess really did not prove refractory, and accepted the sum of money, and Irína really did consent, without waiting for the expiration of the appointed term. It was not easy for her to break her bond with Litvínoff; she loved him, and, when she had sent him the note, she almost took to her bed, wept incessantly, grew thin and sallow. . . But, nevertheless, a month later the Princess took her away to Petersburg, and settled her at the Count's, confiding her to the guardianship of the Countess, a very kind woman, but with the mind of a chicken and the exterior of a chicken.

But Litvínoff then abandoned the university, and went off to his father in the country. Little by little his wound healed. At first he heard nothing about Irína, and he avoided talking about Petersburg and Petersburg society. Then gradually reports began to circulate about her, not evil, but strange reports; rumour began to busy itself with her. The name of the young Princess Osínin, surrounded with splendour, stamped with a special seal, came to be more and more frequently mentioned in provincial circles. It was uttered with curiosity, with respect, with envy, as the name of Countess Vorotýnsky had formerly been

uttered. At last the news of her marriage was spread abroad. But Litvínoff paid hardly any attention to this last bit of news: he was already betrothed to Tatyána.

And now it has probably become intelligible to the reader precisely what it was that recurred to Litvínoff, when he exclaimed: " Is it possible! " and therefore we will now return to Baden and resume the thread of our interrupted story.

X

It was very late when Litvínoff got to sleep, and he did not sleep long: the sun had only just risen when he rose from his bed. The summits of the dark hills which were visible from his windows were glowing with a moist crimson hue against the clear sky. "How fresh it must be yonder, under the trees!" he said to himself, and he hastily dressed himself, cast an abstracted glance at the bouquet, which had blossomed out even more luxuriantly during the night, took his cane, and betook himself to the well-known "Cliffs," behind the "Old Castle." The morning enveloped him in its strong and tranquil caress. He breathed vigorously, he moved vigorously; the health of youth played in his every sinew; the earth itself seemed to rise up to meet his light tread. With every step he felt more amiably disposed, more cheerful: he walked along in the dewy shade, over the coarse sand of the paths, past the pines, the tips of all whose twigs were rimmed with the vivid green of the spring shoots. "How glorious this is!" he kept saying to himself. All at once he heard voices that were familiar to him: he glanced ahead and descried Voroshíloff and Bambáeff,

who were walking toward him. He fairly writhed: he darted aside, like a school-boy evading his teacher, and hid behind a bush. . . "Oh, my Creator!" he prayed, "carry my fellow-countrymen past!" It seemed to him at that moment that he would have begrudged no amount of money, if only they might not catch sight of him. . . And, in fact, they did not catch sight of him: the Creator bore his fellow-countrymen past. Voroshíloff, with his cadet-like self-complacent voice, was explaining to Bambáeff about the various "phases" of Gothic architecture, while Bambáeff merely grunted approvingly; it was evident that Voroshíloff had already been overwhelming him for a long time with his "phases," and the good-natured enthusiast was beginning to be bored. Long did Litvínoff, biting his lip, and craning his neck, listen to the retreating footsteps; long did cadences, now guttural, now nasal, of that instructive harangue resound; at last all became silent. Litvínoff heaved a sigh of relief, emerged from his ambush, and pursued his way.

For three hours he roamed about the mountains. Now he deserted the path, and leaped from rock to rock, occasionally slipping on the smooth moss; again he seated himself on a fragment of the cliff, beneath an oak or a beech, and indulged in pleasant thoughts, to the ceaseless murmur of the brooks, overgrown with ferns, the soothing rustle of the leaves, and the ringing song of a solitary

blackbird; a slight drowsiness, also agreeable, stole upon him, seemed to embrace him from behind, and he fell asleep . . . but suddenly he smiled and cast a glance about him: the green and gold of the forest, of the forest air, beat gently on his sight—and again he smiled, and again he closed his eyes. He felt like breakfasting, and betook himself in the direction of the " Old Castle," where, for a few kreutzers, he would be able to obtain a glass of good milk and coffee. But he had not succeeded in taking his place at one of the small white-painted tables, which stood on the platform in front of the castle, when he heard the laboured snorting of horses, and three calashes made their appearance, from which poured forth a rather numerous party of ladies and cavaliers . . . . Litvínoff immediately recognised them for Russians, although they were all talking in French . . because they were talking in French. The toilets of the ladies were distinguished by exquisite smartness; the cavaliers wore brand-new coats, but tight-fitting and with a well-defined waist, which is not altogether usual in our day, trousers of grey figured material, and very shiny city hats. A low, black neckcloth closely encircled the neck of each cavalier, and something military made itself felt in their whole bearing. As a matter of fact, they were military men; Litvínoff had happened upon a picnic of young generals, persons of the highest society, and of con-

siderable importance. Their importance was announced in every point: in their discreet ease of manner, in their gracefully majestic smiles, in the strained abstraction of their glance, in the effeminate twitching of their shoulders, in the swaying motion of their figures, and in the bend of their knees; it was betrayed by the very sound of their voices, which seemed to be amiably and fastidiously returning thanks to a subservient throng. All these warriors were splendidly washed, shaved, perfumed through and through with some scent or other which is a genuine appurtenance of the nobility and the Guards, a mixture of the most capital cigar smoke and the most astonishing patchouli. And all their hands were those of nobles—white, large, with nails as strong as ivory; the moustaches of all fairly shone, their teeth gleamed, and their very delicate skin was red on the cheeks, blue on the chin. Some of the young generals were playful, others were thoughtful; but the stamp of superior propriety lay upon them all. Each one, apparently, was profoundly conscious of his own worth, and of the dignity of his future part in the empire, and bore himself severely and boldly, with a faint tinge of that friskiness, that " devil-take-me " air, which so naturally makes its appearance during travels abroad. Having noisily and pompously seated themselves, the company summoned the bustling waiters. Litvínoff made haste to finish his glass of

milk, paid what he owed, and pulling his hat well down over his eyes, he was on the point of slipping past the picnic of generals. . .

"Grigóry Mikhaílitch," said a woman's voice. —"Don't you know me?"

He involuntarily halted. That voice. . That voice had but too often caused his heart to beat in days gone by. . . He turned round and beheld Irína.

She was sitting at a table, and with her arms crossed on the back of a chair which had been pushed aside, she was gazing at him courteously, almost joyously, with her head bent on one side, and smiling.

Litvínoff instantly recognised her, although she had changed since he had seen her for the last time, ten years previously, although from a young girl she had become a woman. Her slender figure had developed and blossomed out, the lines of her formerly compressed shoulders now suggested those of the goddesses who start forth from the ceilings of ancient Italian palaces. But her eyes remained the same, and it seemed to Litvínoff that they were gazing at him in the same manner as then, in that tiny house in Moscow.

"Irína Pávlovna . . . ." he began irresolutely.

"You recognise me? How glad I am! . . . how I . . ." (She paused, blushed slightly, and drew herself up.) "This is a very pleasant meeting," she went on in French.—"Allow me to in-

troduce you to my husband. *Valérien,* Monsieur Litvínoff, *un ami d'enfance;* Valerián Vladímirovitch Ratmíroff, my husband."

One of the young generals, almost the most elegant of them all, rose from his chair, and bowed to Litvínoff with extreme courtesy, while his remaining comrades knit their brows slightly, or, not so much knit their brows, as became immersed, for the moment, each one in himself, as though protesting in advance at any connection with a strange civilian, while the other ladies who were taking part in the picnic considered it necessary to screw their eyes up a trifle and to grin, and even to express dissatisfaction on their faces.

"You. . . . Have you been long in Baden?" inquired General Ratmíroff, assuming an affected air, in a certain non-Russian fashion, and evidently not knowing what to talk about with the friend of his wife's youth.

"Not long," replied Litvínoff.

"And do you intend to remain long?" went on the polite general.

"I have not yet made up my mind."

"Ah! That is very pleasant . . . very."

The general became dumb. Litvínoff also maintained silence.

Both held their hats in their hands, and with bodies inclined forward and teeth displayed, they stared at each other's brows.

"*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche,*" struck

up, out of tune, as a matter of course,—we have yet to meet the Russian noble who does not sing out of tune,—a mole-eyed, sallow general with an expression of perpetual irritation on his face, as though he could not pardon himself for his own appearance. He was the only one among all those comrades who did not resemble a rose.

"But why do not you sit down, Grigóry Mikhaílitch?" remarked Irína at last.

Litvínoff obeyed and sat down.

"I say, Valerian, give me a light," said (in English) another general, also young but already obese, with immovable eyes, which seemed to be riveted on the air, and with thick, silky side-whiskers, in which he slowly plunged his snow-white fingers. Ratmíroff gave him a silver box filled with matches.

"*Avec vous des papiros?*" inquired one of the ladies, with a lisp.

"*De vrais papelitos, comtesse.*"

"*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche,*" struck up the mole-eyed general again, almost gnashing his teeth.

"You certainly must call upon us," Irína was saying, meanwhile, to Litvínoff.—"We are living in the Hotel de l'Europe. I am always at home from four until six. You and I have not seen each other for a long time."

Litvínoff cast a glance at Irína; she did not lower her eyes.

"Yes, Irína Pávlovna, it is a long time. Not since Moscow days."

"Since Moscow days—since Moscow days," she repeated haltingly.—"Do come; we will have a chat and recall old times. But, do you know, Grigóry Mikhaílitch, you have not altered much."

"Really? But you have changed, Irína Pávlovna."

"I have grown old."

"No, that was not what I meant to say. . ."

"Irène?" in an inquiring tone of voice, said one of the ladies, with a yellow bonnet on yellow hair, after a preliminary whisper and giggle with the cavalier who sat beside her.—"Irína?"

"I have grown old," repeated Irína, making no reply to the lady; "but I have not changed. No, no, I have not changed in any way."

"*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche!*" rang out again. The irritable general could recall only the first line of the familiar song.

"It still pricks, Your Illustriousness," said the fat general with the side-whiskers in a loud voice, pronouncing his *os* broadly, probably in allusion to some amusing story familiar to the whole *beau monde,* and uttering a curt, wooden laugh, he again fixed his eyes on the air. All the rest of the party broke out laughing also.

"What a sad dog you are, Bóris!" remarked (in English) Ratmíroff in a low tone. He even

pronounced the name "Borís" in English fashion.

"Irène?" inquired for the third time, the lady in the yellow bonnet. Irína turned quickly toward her.

"*Eh, bien! quoi? Que me voulez-vous?*"

"*Je vous le dirai plus tard,*" replied the lady affectedly. Although possessed of an extremely unattractive exterior, she was constantly indulging in affectations and grimaces; a certain wit had once said of her that she "*minaudait dans le vide*"—made grimaces at empty space.

Irína frowned and impatiently shrugged her shoulders.

"*Mais que fait donc Monsieur Verdier? Pourquoi ne vient-il pas?*" exclaimed one lady, with those drawling accents which are insufferable to French ears, and which constitute the specialty of the Great Russian pronunciation.

"Akh, you, akh, you, Monsieur Verdier, Monsieur Verdier," groaned a lady, who had certainly been born in Arzamás.

"*Tranquillisez-vous, mesdames,*" interposed Ratmíroff:—"*Monsieur Verdier m'a promis de venir se mettre à vos pieds.*"

"Ha, ha, ha!"—the ladies began to flutter their fans.

The waiter brought several glasses of beer.

"*Bairisch-bier?*" inquired the general with the side-whiskers, intentionally speaking in a bass

voice, and pretending to be surprised.—"*Guten Morgen.*"

"Well? Is Count Pável still there?" one young general coldly and languidly asked another.

"Yes,"—replied the other, with equal coldness. —"*Mais c'est provisoire.* Serge, they say, is in his place."

"Oho!" hissed the other through his teeth.

"Ye-es," hissed the first.

"I cannot understand," began the general who had been humming the song:—"I cannot understand what possessed Pólya to defend himself, to allege various excuses. . . Well, he molested the merchant, *il lui a fait rendre gorge* . . . well, but what of that? He may have had his reasons."

"He was afraid . . of being shown up in the newspapers," muttered some one.

The irritable general flared up.

"Well, that is the very worst of all! The newspapers! Shown up! If it had depended on me, all I would permit your newspapers to print would be the fixed prices of meat and of bread, and the advertisements of the sale of fur cloaks and boots."

"And of noblemen's estates at auction," put in Ratmíroff.

"If you like, under present conditions. But what a conversation in Baden, at the Vieux Château!"

"*Mais pas du tout! pas du tout!*" lisped the lady in the yellow bonnet.—"*J'adore les questions politiques.*"

"*Madame a raison,*" interposed another general, with an extremely agreeable and rather effeminate face.—"Why should we avoid those questions . . . even in Baden?" At these words he glanced politely at Litvínoff, and smiled condescendingly.—"An upright man ought nowhere, under any circumstances, to renounce his convictions. Is not that true?"

"Of course," replied the irritable general, also casting his eyes on Litvínoff, and, as it were, indirectly reproving him:—"but I do not perceive the necessity . . ."

"No, no," interrupted the condescending general, with his former mildness.

"Here our friend, Valerián Vladímirovitch, alluded to the sale of noblemen's estates. What of that? Is it not a fact?"

"But it is impossible to sell them now; nobody wants them!" exclaimed the irritable general.

"Possibly . . . possibly. Therefore, it is necessary to declare that fact . . . that sad fact, at every step. We are ruined—very good. We are humiliated,—it is impossible to dispute that; but we large proprietors, we represent a principle . . *un principe* . . . nevertheless. It is our duty to uphold that principle. Pardon, madame, I think you have dropped your handkerchief. When a

certain blindness, so to speak, takes possession of even the loftiest minds, we ought to point out—humbly point out" (the general stretched out his finger),—"point out with the finger to the citizen the abyss whither everything is hastening. We ought to utter a warning: we ought to say with respectful firmness: 'turn back, turn back. .' That is what we ought to say."

"But it is impossible to turn back completely," remarked Ratmíroff thoughtfully.

The condescending general merely grinned.

"Completely; completely back, *mon très cher.* The further back the better."

Again the general cast a polite glance at Litvínoff. The latter could restrain himself no longer.

"You would not have us return to the time of the Seven Boyárs, Your Excellency?"

"Even that! I expressed my meaning without any ambiguity; we must do over . . . yes . . . do over everything that has been done."

"And the nineteenth of February also?"

"Yes, the nineteenth of February[1] also,—so far as that is possible. *On est patriote ou on ne l'est pas.* 'But freedom?' I shall be asked. Do you think this freedom is sweet to the people? Just ask them. . . ."

"Try," retorted Litvínoff:—"try to deprive them of that freedom. . ."

[1] The date of the Emancipation Proclamation, March 3, 1861.—Translator.

"*Comment nommez-vous ce monsieur?*" whispered the general to Ratmíroff.

"But what are you talking about there?" suddenly began the fat general, who, evidently, played the part of a spoiled child in this company. "Still about the newspapers? About quill-drivers? Let me tell you what an experience I had with a quill-driver—it was splendid! I was told: '*un folliculaire* has written a libel on you.' Well, of course, I immediately called him to account. They brought the dear man. . . 'How come you,' says I, 'my friend, *folliculaire,* to be writing libels? Have you conquered your patriotism?' 'I have,' says he. 'Well, and do you love money, *folliculaire?*' says I. 'I do,' says he. So then, my dear sirs, I let him smell of the knob of my cane.—'And do you love this also, my angel?'—'No,' says he, 'I don't love that.'—'Well,' says I, 'you smell of that in proper fashion—my hands are clean.'—'I don't like it,' says he, 'and that 's enough.'—'But I, my dear fellow,' says I, 'love it very much, only not for myself. Do you understand this allegory, my treasure?'—'I understand,' says he.—'Then look to it, be a good boy hereafter, and now here 's a ruble for you; take yourself off, and bless me day and night.' And the *folliculaire* departed."

The general broke into a laugh, and all the others again followed his example and laughed—all, with the exception of Irína, who did not even

smile, and stared in a somewhat gloomy manner at the story-teller.

The condescending general tapped Borís on the shoulder.

"You invented the whole of that, my beloved friend. . As if you would menace any one with a cane. . . You have n't even any cane. *C'est pour faire rire ces dames.* It was just for the sake of a joke. But that 's not the point. I said a while ago that we must return completely. Understand me, I am not an enemy to so-called progress; but all those universities and seminaries there, and schools for the common people, those students, priests' sons, plebeians, and that small fry, *tout ce fond du sac, la petite propriété, pire que le proletariat"*—(the general spoke in a subdued, almost prostrated voice)—*"voilà ce qui m'effraie* . . . that is what must be stopped . . . and it will stop." (Again he cast a caressing glance at Litvínoff.) "Yes, sir, we must call a halt. Do not forget that with us no one demands anything, asks anything. Does any one ask for self-government, for example? Do *you* ask for it? Or dost thou? or thou? or do you, mesdames? For you not only govern yourselves but also all the rest of us." (The general's extremely handsome countenance lighted up with an amused smile.) "My dear friends, why flee like a hare? Democracy delights in you, it burns incense before you, it is ready to subserve your ends . . for you know

this sword is two-edged. The old ways of times gone by are the best, after all . . They are much safer. Do not permit the common people to reason, and put your trust in the aristocracy, in which alone there is power. . . Really, it will be better so. But as for progress . . . personally, I have no objection to progress. Only, do not give us any lawyers, and jurors, and some county officials or other—but discipline, most of all, do not meddle with discipline; but you can build bridges, and quays, and hospitals, and why should not the streets be illuminated with gas?"

"Petersburg has been fired on all four sides, and there 's progress for you!" hissed the irritable general.

"Well, I perceive that you are rancorous," remarked the fat general languidly, as he swayed to and fro.—"It would be a good thing to appoint you Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod; but, in my opinion, *avec Orphée aux enfers le progrès a dit son dernier mot.*"

"Vous dites toujours des bêtises," giggled the lady from Arzamás.

The general assumed an air of dignity.

"Je ne suis jamais plus sérieux, madame, que quand je dis des bêtises."

"Monsieur Verdier used that phrase several times," remarked Irína, in a low tone.

"De la poigne et des formes!" exclaimed the fat general:—*"de la poigne surtout.* And that

may be translated into Russian thus: be courteous, but give it to them straight in the teeth!"

"Akh, you scamp, you incorrigible scamp!" interposed the condescending general.—"Please do not listen to him, mesdames. He would not hurt a gnat. He contents himself with devouring his own heart."

"Well, but no, Borís," began Ratmíroff, exchanging a glance with his wife:—"a jest is a jest, but this is carrying the thing too far. Progress is a manifestation of social life, and that must be borne in mind; it is a symptom. One must keep an eye on it."

"Well, yes," returned the fat general, and wrinkled up his nose.—"'T is a well-known fact that your aim is to be a statesman!"

"My aim is not in the least, to become a statesman. . . What has statesmanship to do with that? But one must not refuse to admit the truth."

"Bóris" again plunged his fingers into his whiskers, and riveted his eyes on the air.

"Social life is very important, because in the development of a nation, in the fate, so to speak, of the fatherland . . ."

"Valérien," interrupted "Bóris" impressively:—"*il y a des dames ici.* I did not expect this from you. Or do you wish to get on a committee?"

"But they are all discontinued now, thank God," interposed the irritable general, and again

began to hum: "*Deux gendarmes un beau dimanche. . . . .*"

Ratmíroff raised his batiste handkerchief to his nose, and gracefully subsided into silence; the irritable general repeated: "The scamp! the scamp!" But "Bóris" turned to the lady who was making grimaces into empty space, and, without lowering his voice, without even altering the expression of his face, he began to ask her when she "would crown his flame," as he was amazingly in love with her, and was suffering to an unusual degree.

With every moment that passed during the course of this conversation Litvínoff felt more and more uncomfortable. His pride, his honourable, plebeian pride, fairly rose up in revolt. What was there in common between him, the son of a petty official, and those military aristocrats from Petersburg? He loved everything which they hated, he hated everything which they loved; he recognised that fact too plainly: he felt it with his whole being. He considered their jests insipid, their tone intolerable, their every movement artificial; in the very softness of their speech his ear detected scorn which revolted him—and yet he seemed to have grown timid in their presence —in the presence of those people, those enemies. . . "Faugh, how disgusting! I embarrass them, I seem ridiculous to them," kept whirling through his brain:—"and why do I remain here? Let me

go, let me go at once!" Irína's presence could not detain him: she also aroused melancholy emotions in him. He rose from his chair and began to take leave.

"Are you going already?" said Irína, but after a little reflection she ceased to insist, and merely made him promise that he would not fail to call on her. General Ratmíroff, with the same refined courtesy as before, took leave of him, shook hands with him, and escorted him to the edge of the platform. . . But Litvínoff had barely passed round the first turn in the road, when a hearty burst of laughter rang out behind him. This laughter did not refer to him, but to the long-expected Monsieur Verdier, who suddenly made his appearance on the platform, in a Tyrolean hat, a blue blouse, and mounted astride of an ass; but the blood fairly rushed to Litvínoff's cheeks, and he felt bitter, as though wormwood had glued his tightly-compressed lips together. "The despicable, vulgar creatures!" he muttered, without taking into consideration that the few moments spent in company of those people had not furnished him any cause to express himself so harshly. And Irína, the Irína who had once been his, had got into that set! She moved in it, lived in it, reigned in it, for it she had sacrificed her own dignity, the best sentiments of her heart. . . Evidently, all was as it should be; evidently, she deserved no better fate! How glad he was that

it had not occurred to her to question him as to his intentions! He would have been obliged to state them before "them," in "their" presence. . . "Not for any consideration! Never!" whispered Litvínoff, inhaling a deep breath of the fresh air, and descending the path to Baden almost at a run. He thought of his affianced bride, of his dear, good, holy Tánya, and how pure, how noble, how upright, she appeared to him! With what genuine emotion he recalled her features, her words, even her habits . . . with what impatience did he await her return!

His rapid pace calmed his nerves. On reaching home he seated himself at the table, took a book in his hand, and suddenly threw it down, and even shuddered. . What had happened to him? Nothing had happened to him, but Irína . . . Irína . . . his encounter with her suddenly struck him as surprising, strange, unusual. Was it possible he had met, had talked with that same Irína? . . . And why did not that repulsive, worldly stamp, wherewith all the others were so plainly marked, lie upon her also? Why did it seem to him that she was bored, or grieved, or oppressed by her position? She was in their camp, but she was not an enemy. And what could have made her treat him with such cordiality, ask him to come to her?

Litvínoff gave a start.—"Oh Tánya, Tánya!" he exclaimed impulsively:—"thou art my angel,

my good genius—I love thee alone and will always love thee. And I will not go to that woman. I will have nothing whatever to do with her! Let her amuse herself with her generals!"

Litvínoff again took up a book.

XI

Litvínoff took up a book, but he could not read. He left the house, strolled about a little, listened to the music, stared a while at the gaming, and again returned to his room—again made an attempt to read—still without success. Time, for some reason, dragged on with particular slowness. Pishtchálkin, the well-meaning arbitrator of the peace, came in, and sat there for about three hours. He conversed, explained, put questions, argued in the intervals—now on lofty themes, now on useful ones, and at last diffused such tedium that poor Litvínoff almost set up a howl. In the art of inspiring tedium, melancholy, cold, helpless, hopeless tedium, Pishtchálkin had no rival, even among the people of the loftiest morality, who are well-known masters in that line. The mere sight of his closely-clipped, smoothly-brushed head, of his light, lifeless eyes, his well-formed nose, inspired involuntary despondency, and his slow, baritone, apparently slumbering voice, seemed to have been created for the purpose of uttering, with conviction and perspicuity, apophthegms to the effect that two and two make four, and not five, and not three; that water is wet, and that virtue is laudable; that a private

person, equally with an empire, and an empire, equally with a private person, must have credit for financial operations. And withal, he was a most excellent man! But such is the fate decreed to Russia: our most excellent people are tiresome. Pishtchálkin withdrew; Bindásoff took his place, and slowly, with immense impudence, demanded that Litvínoff should lend him one hundred guldens, which the latter gave him, in spite of the fact that he not only took no interest in Bindásoff, but even loathed him, and knew for a certainty that he would never get his money back again; moreover, he needed it himself. Then why did he give it to him? the reader asks. The devil knows why! The Russians are great fellows at that. Let the reader lay his hand on his heart and recall how many acts in his own life have had, positively, no other cause. But Bindásoff did not even thank Litvínoff: he demanded a glass of Affenthaler (the red wine of Baden) and went away, without wiping his lips, and with a rude clumping of his boots. And how angry Litvínoff was with himself, as he gazed at the red neck of the departing monopolist! Just before evening he received a letter from Tánya, in which she informed him that in consequence of her aunt's illness she could not reach Baden in less than five or six days. This news produced an unpleasant effect on Litvínoff: it aggravated his vexation, and he went to bed early in an evil

frame of mind. The following day turned out no better than the preceding, worse, if anything. From early morning Litvínoff's room was filled with his fellow-countrymen: Bambáeff, Voroshíloff, Pishtchálkin, the two officers, the two Heidelberg students, all thronged in at once, and never took their departure until almost dinner-time, although they speedily talked themselves out, and were evidently bored. They simply did not know what to do with themselves, and having once got into Litvínoff's quarters, they "stuck" there, as the expression is. At first they discussed the fact that Gubaryóff had gone back to Heidelberg, and that they must betake themselves to him; then they philosophised a little, touched on the Polish question; then they proceeded to argue about gambling, courtesans, began to narrate scandalous anecdotes; at last a conversation arose about strong men, fat men, and gluttons. Ancient anecdotes were dragged out into the light of day, about Lúkin, about the deacon who devoured, on a wager, thirty-three herrings, about the colonel of Uhlans, Izyédinoff, well known for his obesity, about the soldier who broke a beef-bone over his own forehead; and then came downright lies. Pishtchálkin himself narrated, with a yawn, that he knew a peasant woman in Little Russia, who, at her death, weighed twenty-seven puds[1] and several pounds, and a

[1] A *pud* is thirty-six pounds.—TRANSLATOR.

landed proprietor, who had devoured three geese and a sturgeon for breakfast. Bambáeff suddenly went into raptures, and declared that he himself was in a condition to eat a whole sheep, "of course, with condiments," while Voroshíloff rashly made such an absurd remark about his comrade, the muscular cadet, that all became silent, remained silent, stared at one another, took their hats, and dispersed. When he was left alone, Litvínoff tried to occupy himself with some work, but it seemed exactly as though soot had got into his head; he could do nothing of value, and the evening also was wasted. On the following morning, as he was preparing to breakfast, some one knocked at his door. "O Lord!"—said Litvínoff to himself,—"there 's some one of those friends of yesterday again," and not without considerable shuddering, he called out:

"Herein!"

The door opened very softly, and Potúgin entered the room.

Litvínoff was extremely glad to see him.

"This is delightful!" he exclaimed, warmly pressing the hand of his unexpected guest:—"thank you! I should certainly have called on you, but you would not tell me where you live. Sit down, please, lay aside your hat. Sit down, I say!"

Potúgin made no reply to Litvínoff's friendly

speeches, but stood shifting from foot to foot in the middle of the room, and merely laughed and rocked his head. Litvínoff's joyous reception evidently touched him, but there was something constrained in the expression of his face.

"There . . is a little misunderstanding here . . ." he began, not without hesitation.—"Of course I am always pleased . . . but, to tell the truth . . I have been sent to you."

"That is, you mean to say," remarked Litvínoff in a mournful tone,—"that you would not have come to me of your own accord?"

"O, no, good gracious! . . . But I . . I—perhaps I should not have made up my mind to intrude upon you to-day, if I had not been requested to call on you. In short, I have a message for you."

"From whom, permit me to inquire?"

"From a person of your acquaintance: from Irína Pávlovna Ratmíroff. Two days ago you promised to call upon her, and you have not done so."

Litvínoff fixed his eyes in amazement upon Potúgin.

"Are you acquainted with Madame Ratmíroff?"

"As you see."

"And do you know her intimately?"

"I am her friend, to a certain degree."

Litvínoff said nothing.

"Allow me to ask you," he began at last:—"do you know why Irína Pávlovna wishes to see me?"

Potúgin walked to the window.

"Yes, to a certain extent I do know. So far as I am able to judge, she was greatly delighted at her meeting with you,—well, and so she wishes to renew your former relations."

"Renew!" repeated Litvínoff.—"Excuse my indiscretion, but permit me to ask you still another question. Do you know the nature of those relations?"

"To tell the truth,—no, I do not. But I assume," added Potúgin, suddenly turning to Litvínoff, and gazing at him in a friendly way:—"I assume that they were of a good sort. Irína Pávlovna praised you highly, and I had to give her my word that I would bring you. You will go?"

"When?"

"Now . . . immediately."

Litvínoff merely flung out his hands with a gesture of surprise.

"Irína Pávlovna," went on Potúgin,—"takes it for granted that that . . . how shall I express it . . . that set of people, let us say, in which you found her two days before yesterday, could not have aroused any special sympathy in you; but she has commanded me to say that the devil is not as black as he is painted."

"H'm. . . . . Is that expression applied precisely to that . . . . set?"

"Yes . . and in general."

"H'm . . . Well, and what is your own opinion about the devil, Sozónt Ivánitch?"

"I think, Grigóry Mikhaílitch, that, in any case, he is not what he is represented to be."

"Is he better?"

"Whether he is better or worse it is difficult to decide, but he is not as represented. Well, how is it to be? Shall we go?"

"You sit here a while first. I must confess, that it strikes me as rather strange. ."

"What does, if I may presume to inquire?"

"How have you—you in particular—been able to become the friend of Irína Pávlovna?"

Potúgin surveyed himself with a glance.

"With my figure and my position in society, it really does seem incredible; but you know—Shakespeare said: 'There are many things, friend Horatio,' and so forth. Life also does not like to jest. Here 's a comparison for you: a tree stands before you, and there is no wind; how can a leaf on the lowest bough touch a leaf on the highest bough? In no way whatever. But let a storm arise, and everything gets mixed up—and those two leaves come into contact."

"Aha! That means that there has been a storm?"

"I should think so! Can one get along in life

without storms? But away with philosophy. It is time to go."

But Litvínoff still hesitated.

"O Lord!" exclaimed Potúgin, with a comical grimace:—"how queer the young men have become nowadays! The most charming of women invites them to her, sends a messenger after them, a special messenger, and they stand on ceremony! Shame on you, my dear sir, shame on you! Here 's your hat. Take it, and '*vorwärts!*' as our friends the ardent Germans say."

Litvínoff still stood for a space in thought, but ended by taking his hat, and sallying forth from his chamber with Potúgin.

XII

They came to one of the best hotels in Baden, and asked for Madame Ratmíroff. The hall-porter first inquired their names, then immediately replied, "*die Frau Fürstin ist zu Hause,*" and himself conducted them up the stairs, knocked on the door of the room with his own hand, and announced them. "*Die Frau Fürstin*" received them at once; she was alone: her husband had gone off to Karlsruhe to meet an official big-wig, one of "the influential personages," who was passing through. Irína was seated beside a small table and embroidering on canvas when Potúgin and Litvínoff crossed the threshold. She hastily threw aside her sewing, pushed the table away, and rose; an expression of unfeigned satisfaction spread over her face. She wore a morning gown, closed to the throat; the beautiful outlines of her shoulders and arms were visible through the thin material; her carelessly twisted hair had become loosened, and fell low on her slender neck. Irína cast a swift glance at Potúgin, whispered "*merci,*" and offered her hand to Litvínoff, amiably reproaching him for his forgetfulness. "And an old friend at that," she added.

Litvínoff began to make excuses. *" C'est bien, c'est bien,"* she said hastily, and taking his hat from him with gracious force, she made him sit down. Potúgin also seated himself, but immediately rose, and saying that he had business which could not be deferred, and that he would drop in after dinner, he took his leave. Irína again threw him a swift glance and gave him a friendly nod, and as soon as he had disappeared behind the portière, she turned to Litvínoff with impatient vivacity.

" Grigóry Mikhaílovitch," she began in Russian, in her soft and resonant voice:—" here we are alone at last, and I can say to you that I am very glad of our meeting, because it . . . it affords me the opportunity . . ." (Irína looked him straight in the face), "to ask your forgiveness."

Litvínoff involuntarily shuddered. He had not anticipated such a rapid attack. He had not anticipated that she herself would turn the conversation on bygone days.

" For what . . forgiveness . . ." he stammered out.

Irína blushed.

" For what? . . you know for what," she said, and turned aside a little.—" I was to blame toward you, Grigóry Mikhaílitch . . although, of course, such was my fate " (Litvínoff recalled her letter), " and I do not regret it . . in any case, it would be too late; but when I met you so un-

expectedly, I said to myself that we must become friends without fail—without fail . . . and I should have felt deeply pained if it had not succeeded . . . and it seems to me, that to that end, you and I must have an explanation without delay, and once for all, in order that thereafter there might be no . . . *gêne,* no awkwardness, —once for all,—Grigóry Mikhaílovitch; and that you ought to tell me that you forgive me, otherwise I shall suspect in you . . . *de la rancune. Voilà!* It may be a great piece of assumption on my part, because you, in all probability, have long ago forgotten everything, but, nevertheless, do tell me that you have forgiven me."

Irína uttered this entire speech without taking breath, and Litvínoff could see that tears glistened in her eyes . . yes, actually tears.

"Pray, Irína Pávlovna," he hastily began:—"are n't you ashamed to excuse yourself, to ask forgiveness . . it is an affair of the past, it has utterly lapsed out of existence, and I can but feel surprised that you, in the midst of the splendour which surrounds you, can still have preserved a memory of the gloomy companion of your early youth. . ."

"Does that surprise you?" said Irína softly.

"It touches me," replied Litvínoff:—"because I could not possibly imagine . . ."

"But you have not yet told me that you have forgiven me," interrupted Irína.

"I rejoice sincerely in your happiness, Irína Pávlovna; with all my soul I wish you the very best on earth. . . ."

"And you bear no ill-will?"

"I remember only those fair moments, for which I was, in times past, indebted to you."

Irína extended both her hands to him. Litvínoff pressed them warmly, and did not immediately release them. . . . A mysterious something which had long ceased to exist began to stir in his heart at that soft contact. Again Irína looked him straight in the face; but this time he smiled. . . And for the first time he gazed directly and intently at her. . . Again he recognised the features, once so dear, and those deep eyes with their unusual lashes, and the little mole on the cheek, and the peculiar sweep of the hair above the brow, and her habit of curling her lips in a certain gracious and amusing way, and of imparting to her eyebrows the suspicion of a quiver, he recognised all, all. . . But how much more beautiful she had grown! What charm and power in the young feminine body! And there was neither red paint, nor white, nor blackening for the eyebrows, nor powder, nor any sort of artificiality on the fresh, pure face. . . Yes, she was a real beauty!

A meditative mood took possession of Litvínoff. . . . He continued to gaze at her, but his thoughts were already far away. . . Irína observed this.

"Well, that's capital," she said aloud:—"Well, now my conscience is at ease, and I can satisfy my curiosity. . . ."

"Curiosity," repeated Litvínoff, as though in perplexity.

"Yes, yes. . . I insist upon knowing what you have been doing all this time, what your plans are; I want to know everything just the same as when . . . everything, everything . . . and you must tell me the truth, because, I warn you, that I have not lost sight of you . . . so far as that has been possible. . ."

"You have not lost sight of me, you . . . there . . in Petersburg?"

"In the midst of the splendour which surrounds me, as you just expressed it. Yes, exactly that; I have not lost sight of you. You and I will discuss the splendour later on; but now you must narrate to me a great deal, narrate at length; no one will disturb us. Akh, how splendid that will be!" added Irína, merrily, seating herself in an arm-chair and putting on a pretty air.—"Come, now, begin."

"Before I tell my story, I must thank you," began Litvínoff.

"What for?"

"For the bouquet of flowers which made its appearance in my chamber."

"What bouquet? I know nothing about it."

"What?"

"I tell you, I know nothing about it. . . But

I am waiting . . . waiting for your story.—Akh, what a clever fellow that Potúgin is to have brought you!"

Litvínoff pricked up his ears.

"Have you been acquainted long with that Mr. Potúgin?" he inquired.

"Yes, for a long time . . . but tell your story."

"And do you know him intimately?"

"Oh, yes!"—Irína sighed.—"There are peculiar reasons for it. . . You have heard of Eliza Byélsky, of course. . . The one who died such a frightful death last year?—Akh, yes, I had forgotten that our stories are not known to you. Happily, happily, you do not know them. Oh, *quelle chance!* at last, at last, there is one man, a live man, who knows none of our affairs! And one can talk Russian with him, bad Russian, but Russian all the same, and not that eternal, affected, repulsive Petersburg French!"

"And you say that Potúgin had some connection with . . ."

"It is very painful to me to recall that," interposed Irína.—"Eliza was my best friend at the Institute, and afterward, in Petersburg, we saw each other constantly. She confided to me all her secrets: she was very unhappy, she suffered much. Potúgin behaved splendidly in that affair, like a genuine knight! He sacrificed himself. It was only then that I prized him at his true value! But

we have digressed again. I am waiting for your story, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch."

"But my story cannot in the least interest you, Irína Pávlovna."

"That is no concern of yours."

"Remember, Irína Pávlovna, we have not met for ten years. How much has happened,—how much water has flowed past since then!"

"Not water only! not water only!" she repeated, with a peculiar, bitter expression:—"and that is why I wish to hear you. . ."

"And, moreover, I really cannot think where to begin."

"At the beginning. From the very time when you . . . when I went away to Petersburg. You then remained in Moscow. . . Do you know, I have never been back to Moscow since that day!"

"Really?"

"At first it was not possible, and afterward, when I married . . ."

"And have you been married long?"

"Three years."

"You have no children?"

"No," she replied drily.

Litvínoff fell silent.

"And until your marriage you lived altogether with that—what 's his name—Count Reisenbach?"

Irína contemplated him fixedly, as though de-

sirous of comprehending why he asked that question.

"No . . ." she said at last.

"Consequently, your parents. . . By the way, I have not asked you about them. How are they? . . ."

"They are both well."

"And they live in Moscow as formerly?"

"Yes."

"And your brothers and sisters?"

"All is well with them; I have provided for them all."

"Ah!"—Litvínoff cast a sidelong glance at Irína.—"As a matter of fact, Irína Pávlovna, it is not I who ought to relate the story, but you, if only . . ."

He suddenly caught himself up, and stopped speaking.

Irína raised her hands to her face, and began to twist her wedding ring round on her finger.

"Do you think so? I do not refuse," she said at last.—"Some time, if you like. . . But it is your turn first . . because, you see, I have kept watch over you, yet I know almost nothing about you; but about me . . . well, about me, you surely must have heard a good deal. Is n't that true? Tell me, you have heard things?"

"You have occupied too prominent a place in the world, Irína Pávlovna, not to start rumours

. . . especially in the country districts where I was, and where every rumour is believed."

"And you believed those rumours? And of what sort were they?"

"I must confess, Irína Pávlovna, that those rumours very rarely reached my ears. I led an extremely isolated life."

"How so? Were not you in the Crimea, in the militia?"

"And is that known to you?"

"As you see. I tell you that you were watched."

Again Litvínoff was forced to wonder.

"Why should I tell you what is already known to you without that?" said Litvínoff, in a low voice.

"Because . . because . . in order to comply with my request. I entreat you, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch."

Litvínoff inclined his head, and began . . . began rather confusedly, in general outlines, to communicate to Irína his far from complicated adventures. He paused frequently, and cast an inquiring glance at Irína, as much as to say: "Is n't this enough?" But she insistently demanded that he should continue his narration, and pushing her hair back behind her ears, and resting her elbows on the arms of the easy-chair, seemed to be seizing every word with strained attention. Any one looking at her from a distance, and watching the

expression of her face, might have thought that she was not listening to what Litvínoff was telling her, but was merely immersed in meditation. . . But she was not meditating upon Litvínoff, although he became embarrassed, and flushed crimson beneath her persistent gaze. Before her had started forth a whole life, another life, not his—her own life.

Litvínoff did not finish, but fell silent, under the influence of a disagreeable sensation of constantly augmenting, inward discomfort. This time Irína said nothing to him, did not ask him to continue, and pressing her palm to her eyes, as though weary, she slowly leaned against the back of her chair and remained motionless. Litvínoff waited a while, and reflecting that his visit had already lasted more than two hours, was on the point of extending his hand to take his hat, when suddenly, in the adjoining room, the swift squeak of thin, lacquered boots resounded, and, preceded by that same odour of nobility and the Guards, Valerián Vladímirovitch Ratmíroff entered the room.

Litvínoff rose from his chair, and exchanged a bow with the good-looking general. But Irína, without any haste, removed her hand from her face, and bestowing a cold glance upon her husband, remarked, in French:—"Ah! So you have returned! But what time is it?"

"It is almost four o'clock, *ma chère amie,* and

you are not yet dressed—the Princess will be waiting for us," replied the general, and with an elegant inclination of his body in the direction of Litvínoff, with the almost effeminate playfulness in his voice which was peculiar to him, he added: —" Evidently, your amiable guest has made you forget the time."

The reader will permit us to impart to him, at this point, a few facts concerning General Ratmíroff. His father was the natural . . . what do you think? You are not mistaken, but we did not wish to say it . . . the natural son of a prominent grandee of the times of Alexander I., and of a pretty little French actress. The grandee had opened a career for his son, but had left him no property,—and that son (the father of our hero) had not succeeded in becoming rich either: he had died with the rank of colonel, in the vocation of chief of police. A year before his death he had married a pretty young widow, who had been obliged to have recourse to his protection. His son and the widow's, Valerián Vladímirovitch, having got into the Pages Corps through influence, had attracted the attention of the authorities—not so much by proficiency in his studies as by his military bearing, his good manners, and his good morals (although he had been subjected to everything, which all former pupils of the government military institutions must undergo),—and had graduated into the Guards. He

had made a brilliant career, thanks to the modest gaiety of his disposition, his skill in dancing, his masterly riding as orderly officer at parades—mostly on other people's horses—and, in conclusion, to a special art of familiarly-respectful behaviour toward the loftiest personages, a mournfully-caressing, almost forlorn, obsequiousness, not devoid of a dash of liberalism, light as down. . . This liberalism did not prevent him, nevertheless, from soundly flogging fifty peasants in a revolted White Russian village, which he had been sent to pacify. He was the possessor of an attractive and extremely youthful exterior; smooth, ruddy, supple and adhesive: he enjoyed remarkable success with the women: distinguished old ladies fairly went wild over him. Cautious by habit, taciturn through calculation, General Ratmíroff, like the industrious bee, which extracts juice even from wretched flowers, was constantly circulating in the highest society—and, devoid of morality, devoid of every sort of knowledge, but with the reputation of a capable man, with a good scent for people, and comprehension of circumstances, and chief of all—with an inflexibly firm desire of good things for himself—he at last saw all roads open before him. . .

Litvínoff smiled in a constrained way and Irína merely shrugged her shoulders.

"Well," she said, in the same cold tone,—"did you see the Count?"

"Of course I saw him. He asked to be remembered to you."

"Ah! Is he still as stupid as ever, that protector of yours?"

General Ratmíroff made no reply, and only laughed a little through his nose, as though making allowance for the precipitancy of woman's judgment. Benevolent adults reply to the absurd sallies of children with precisely that sort of a laugh.

"Yes," added Irína:—"the stupidity of your Count is too astounding, and it strikes me that I have had plenty of opportunity to observe it."

"It was you yourself who sent me to him," remarked the general, through his teeth, and turning to Litvínoff, he asked him, in Russian:—"Was he undergoing a cure of the Baden waters?"

"I am well, thank God," replied Litvínoff.

"That 's the best thing of all," went on the general, with an amiable grin:—"yes, and in general, people do not come to Baden for the sake of taking the cure; but the waters here are very efficacious, *je veux dire, efficaces;* and for any one who, like myself, for instance, is suffering from a nervous cough. . . ."

Irína rose in haste.—"We shall meet again, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, and that soon, I hope,"—she said in French, scornfully interrupting her husband's speech:—"but now I must go and

dress. That old Princess is insufferable with her eternal *parties de plaisir,* where there is nothing but tedium."

"You are very severe on everything to-day," muttered her husband, and slipped into the other room.

Litvínoff went toward the door.

"You have told me everything," she said, "but you have concealed the principal thing."

"What is that?"

"It is said that you are going to marry?"

Litvínoff crimsoned to his very ears. . . In fact, he had deliberately refrained from mentioning Tánya; but he felt frightfully vexed, in the first place, because Irína knew about his marriage, and in the second, because she had caught him, as it were, in a desire to hide the marriage from her. Decidedly, he did not know what to say, but Irína never took her eyes from him.

"Yes, I am about to marry," he said at last, and immediately took his departure.

Ratmíroff returned to the room.

"Well, why don't you get dressed?" he inquired.

"Go alone; my head aches."

"But the Princess . . ."

Irína measured her husband with a glance from head to foot, turned her back on him, and went off to her dressing-room.

XIII

Litvínoff was extremely dissatisfied with himself, as though he had lost money at roulette, or had broken his pledged word. . An inward voice told him, that as an affianced bridegroom, as a staid grown man, and no longer a boy, it was not proper for him to listen to the instigations of curiosity, nor to the seductions of memory. "Much need there was for me to go!" he argued. "On her side it was nothing but coquetry, a whim, caprice. . She is bored, she has grown tired of every thing, she caught at me . . . a dainty person sometimes suddenly longs for black bread . . . well, and that 's all right. But why did I run to her? Could I . . help despising her?" This last word he did not utter, even mentally, without an effort.—"Of course, there is no danger whatever, and there can be none": he resumed his argument. "For I know with whom I have to deal. But, nevertheless, one should not play with fire. . . I won't set foot in her house again." Litvínoff did not dare, or could not yet, admit to himself, to what a degree Irína had seemed beautiful to him, and how powerfully she had aroused his emotion.

Again the day passed in a dull and languid manner. At dinner he chanced to sit beside a "*bel homme,*" of fine bearing, with dyed moustache, who uttered not a word, but merely puffed and opened his eyes very wide . . . but, being suddenly seized with hiccough, proved to be a fellow-countryman, for he instantly said in Russian: "Did n't I say that I ought not to eat melons!" In the evening also nothing cheering happened: Bindásoff, before Litvínoff's very eyes, won a sum four times as large as the one he had borrowed from him, but not only did not repay the debt, but even looked him in the face with a menacing glance, as though preparing to castigate him even more painfully for having been a witness of his winnings. On the following morning the horde of fellow-countrymen descended upon him again; it was with difficulty that Litvínoff got rid of them, and betaking himself to the mountains, hit upon Irína the very first thing—he pretended that he did not recognise her, and passed swiftly by;—then on Potúgin. He was on the point of entering into conversation with Potúgin, but the latter answered him unwillingly. He was leading by the hand a smartly attired little girl, with fluffy, almost white locks, great dark eyes in a pale, sickly little face, and that peculiar imperious, impatient expression, which is characteristic of spoiled children. Litvínoff spent a couple of hours on the mountains, and then re-

turned home, along Lichtenthaler Avenue. . . . A lady with a blue veil over her face, who was sitting on a bench, hastily rose and approached him. . . He recognised Irína.

"Why do you avoid me, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch," she said in an unsteady voice, such as a person uses whose heart is seething.

Litvínoff was embarrassed.—"Do I avoid you, Irína Pávlovna?"

"Yes, you . . . you . . . ."

Irína seemed agitated, almost incensed.

"You are mistaken, I assure you."

"No, I am not mistaken. Did not I see this morning—when we met,—did not I see that you knew me? Tell me, did n't you recognise me? Tell me?"

"I really . . Irína Pávlovna . . ."

"Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, you are a straightforward man, you have always spoken the truth: tell me—tell me, surely you recognised me? you turned aside deliberately."

Litvínoff glanced at Irína. Her eyes shone with a strange brilliancy, but her lips and cheeks gleamed with a death-like pallor through the close meshes of her veil. In the expression of her face, in the very sound of her impetuous whisper, there was something so irresistibly mournful, beseeching. . . . Litvínoff could dissimulate no longer.

"Yes. . . I recognised you," he said, not without an effort.

Irína shuddered softly, and softly dropped her hands.

"Why did not you come to me?" she whispered.

"Because . . . because!"—Litvínoff stepped aside from the path. Irína silently followed him. —"Why?" he repeated, and his face suddenly lighted up, and a feeling akin to malice oppressed his chest and his throat.—"You . . . you ask that, after all that has taken place between us? Not now, of course, not now, but there . . . there . . . in Moscow."

"But surely, you and I decided, surely you promised . . ." Irína began.

"I promised nothing. Pardon the harshness of my expressions, but you demand the truth—therefore judge for yourself: to what, if not to coquetry,—which is, I confess, incomprehensible to me,—to what, if not to a desire to try how much power you still possess over me, can I attribute your . . I do not know what to call it . . . your persistence? Our paths have become so widely separated! I have forgotten everything, I have long ago lived down the pain of it all, I have become an entirely different man; you are married, happy, in appearance at least; you enjoy an enviable position in society; why then, to what end, a renewal of acquaintance? What am I to you, what are you to me? We cannot understand each other now, we have absolutely nothing in common

now, either in the past or in the present! Especially . . . especially in the past!"

Litvínoff pronounced the whole of this speech hurriedly, abruptly, without turning his head. Irína did not stir, and only from time to time, almost imperceptibly, extended her hands toward him. She seemed to be entreating him to stop and listen to her, and at his last words slightly bit her under lip, as though crushing down a sentiment of keen, swift injury.

"Grigóry Mikhaílovitch," she began at last, in a more composed voice, and retreated still further from the path, along which, now and then, people passed. . .

Litvínoff, in turn, followed her.

"Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, believe me: if I could have imagined that I still retained an atom of power over you, I would have been the first to avoid you. If I did not do so, if I made up my mind, in spite of . . . of my past fault, to renew acquaintance with you, it was because . . . because . . ."

"Because?" inquired Litvínoff, almost roughly.

"Because," replied Irína, with sudden force: —"because that society, that enviable position of which you speak, have become unbearable, insufferable to me; because, on meeting you, a live man, after all those dead dolls—you were able to view specimens of them three days ago at the

Vieux Château,—I rejoiced as at a well in the desert, but you call me a coquette, and suspect me, and repulse me under the pretext that I really was to blame toward you, and still more toward myself!"

"You chose your own destiny, Irína Pávlovna," said Litvínoff surlily, and still without turning his head.

"I did, I did . . . and I do not complain; I have no right to complain," hastily said Irína, to whom Litvínoff's very sternness afforded secret delight;—"I know that you must condemn me, and I do not defend myself; I only wish to explain to you my sentiment, I wish to convince you that I am not disposed to coquet now. . I coquet with you! Why, there is no sense in that! . . . When I saw you, all that was good, all that was young in me, awoke . . . the time when I had not yet chosen my destiny, everything which lies there in that bright zone, beyond those ten years. . . ."

"But permit me, at last, Irína Pávlovna! So far as I am aware, the bright zone in your life began precisely with the moment of our parting. . ."

Irína raised her handkerchief to her lips.

"What you say is very cruel, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch; but I cannot be angry with you. Oh, no, that was not a brilliant time; it was not for my happiness that I quitted Moscow. Not one in-

stant, not one minute of happiness have I known . . . believe me, whatever you may have been told. If I had been happy, could I talk with you as I am doing now? . . I repeat it, you do not know what those people are like. . Why, they understand nothing, sympathise with nothing, they have not even any minds, *ni esprit, ni intelligence,* but only cunning and tact; why, in reality, music, poetry, and art are alike unknown to them. . . You will say that I myself was fairly indifferent to all this; but not to that degree, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch . . . not to that degree! It is not a fashionable woman whom you now see before you. You have only to look at me, not a lioness . . . it seems that is what we are called . . . but a poor, poor creature, who is really deserving of compassion. Be not astonished at my words. . . I am not disposed to be proud now! I reach out my hand to you as a beggar, understand it, at last, as a beggar. . . I entreat alms," she added suddenly, in an involuntary, irrepressible impulse:—"I ask for alms, and you . . . ."

Her voice failed her. Litvínoff raised his head and looked at Irína; she was breathing rapidly, her lips were quivering. His heart suddenly began to beat hard, and his feeling of wrath vanished.

"You say that our paths have parted," resumed Irína:—"I know you are marrying for love; you have the plan for your whole life al-

ready drawn up; yes, it is so; but we have not become strangers to each other, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, we can still understand each other. Or do you suppose that I have become utterly stupid—that I have become utterly mired in this swamp? Akh, no, do not think that, please! Let me ease my soul, I beg of you, if only in the name of those by-gone days, if you are not bent on forgetting them. Let not our meeting have been in vain; that would be too bitter, and it will not last long, in any case. . . I do not know how to express myself as I should; but do understand me, for I ask little, very little . . . only a trifle of happiness, only that you will not repulse me, that you will give me a chance to ease my soul. . ."

Irína paused, tears resounded in her voice. She sighed and gazed at Litvínoff with a timid, rather sidelong, searching glance, and offered him her hand. . .

Litvínoff slowly took that hand, and faintly pressed it.

"Let us be friends," whispered Irína.

"Friends," repeated Litvínoff thoughtfully.

"Yes, friends . . . but if that is too great a demand, then let us be, at least, good acquaintances. . . Let us not stand on ceremony—just as though nothing had ever happened. . . ."

"As though nothing had ever happened . ." repeated Litvínoff again.—"You just told me, Irína Pávlovna, that I am not willing to forget

by-gone days. . Well, and what if I cannot forget them? "

A blissful smile flashed across Irína's face, and instantly vanished, making way for an anxious, almost terrified expression.

" Do as I do, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch: remember only what is pleasant; but, above all, give me your word now, your word of honour. . ."

" What about? "

" Not to avoid me . . . not to grieve me needlessly. . . Do you promise? tell me! "

" Yes."

" And you will banish all evil thoughts from your mind? "

" Yes . . . but I still renounce the effort to understand you."

" That is not necessary . . wait, however, and you will understand me. But you promise? "

" I have already said: Yes."

" Thanks. Observe that I have become accustomed to believe you. I shall expect you to-day or to-morrow; I shall not leave the house. But now I must leave you. The Duchess is walking in the avenue. . . She has seen me, and I cannot avoid going to her. . . Until we meet again. . . Give me your hand, *vite, vite.* . Farewell for the present."

And with a vigorous clasp of Litvínoff's hand, Irína directed her steps toward a middle-aged person who was walking heavily along the sanded

path, accompanied by two other ladies and a very good-looking lackey.

"*Eh, bonjour, chère madame,*" said this person, while Irína respectfully courtesied before her.—"*Comment allez-vous aujourd'hui? Venez un peu avec moi.*"—"*Votre Altesse a trop de bonté,*" Irína's insinuating voice could be heard in reply.

XIV

Litvínoff allowed the Duchess and all her suite to depart, and then emerged upon the avenue himself. He could not give himself a clear account of his sensations; he felt both ashamed and alarmed, and his self-love was flattered. . . The unexpected explanation with Irína had taken him unawares; her burning, hurried words had swept over him like a downpour of rain. "Queer people those society women," he thought;—"there 's no coherence about them . . . and how the circle in which they live perverts them, and the anomalousness of it they feel themselves!" . . . As a matter of fact, he did not think that at all, but was merely repeating mechanically those hackneyed phrases, as though desirous thereby of ridding himself of other and more painful thoughts. He comprehended that it ill-befitted him to meditate seriously at present, that, in all probability, he would be obliged to censure himself: and he strolled slowly along, almost compelling himself to turn his attention to everything which he encountered. . . All at once he found himself in front of a bench, perceived beside it some one's legs, ran his eyes up them. . . The legs belonged

to a man who was sitting on the bench and reading a newspaper; the man proved to be Potúgin. Litvínoff gave vent to a slight exclamation. Potúgin laid his paper on his knees and stared attentively, unsmilingly, at Litvínoff, and Litvínoff also stared attentively and unsmilingly at Potúgin.

"May I sit down beside you?" he asked at last.

"Pray, do. Only I give you warning; if you wish to enter into conversation with me you must not be offended—I 'm in the most misanthropic frame of mind just now, and all objects present themselves to me in an exaggeratedly-evil light."

"That 's nothing, Sozónt Iványitch," said Litvínoff, dropping down on the bench:—"it is even extremely opportune. . . But why has this mood come upon you?"

"As a matter of fact, I ought not to be in a rage," began Potúgin.—"Here I have just been reading about the project for judicial reforms in Russia, and with genuine satisfaction I perceive that we have at last got some common sense, and no longer intend under the pretext of independence there, of nationality or of originality, to tack a home-made tail on to pure, clear European logic; but, on the contrary, . . they are going to take the foreign thing which is good complete. That one concession in the affair of the peasants was sufficient. . . Just try to get rid of com-

munal tenure! . . Quite true, quite true, I ought not to be in a rage; but, to my misfortune, I have happened upon a self-made Russian—I have been talking with him, and those rough nuggets—born geniuses, and self-taught folks will worry me into my grave!"

"What sort of a born genius?" inquired Litvínoff.

"Why, that sort of a gentleman is running about, who fancies himself a gifted musician.—'I,' says he, 'of course am nothing; I 'm a cipher because I never had any education, but I possess incomparably more melodies and more ideas than Meyerbeer.' In the first place, I will remark: why were not you educated? and, in the second, not only Meyerbeer, but the meanest German flute-player, who modestly whistles his part in the meanest German orchestra, has twenty times more ideas than all our born geniuses; only the flute-player keeps his ideas to himself, and does not thrust himself forward with them into the company of Mozarts and Haydns; but our Russian genius gets out a little waltz or a little romance, slap dash, and behold—there he is, hands thrust into his pockets, and a scornful curl on his mouth: 'I 'm a genius,' says he. And it 's just the same with painting and everywhere. How I detest those born geniuses! Who does not know that people pride themselves upon them only in places where there is no real science which has

been assimilated into blood and flesh, nor real art. Is n't it time to file away in the archives this boastfulness, this vulgar rubbish, along with the familiar phrases, to the effect that among us, in Russia, no one dies of hunger, and that travelling by road is of the swiftest sort, and that we can kill everybody with a slap of our caps? They besiege me with the giftedness of the Russian nature, with the instinct of genius, with Kulíbins.[1] But what sort of giftedness is it, gentlemen, for heaven's sake? It is the babbling of a man half asleep, or a half-savage sagacity. Instinct! A pretty thing to brag about, truly! Take an ant in the forest, carry him off a verst away from his hill: he will find the way back home; a man can do nothing of the sort; what of that? is he lower than the ant? Instinct, be it ever so talented, is unworthy of man: reason—simple, sound, commonplace reason—that 's our real fortune, our pride; reason never plays any such pranks; and that 's why everything is founded on it. But as for Kulíbin, who, without knowing anything about mechanics, has constructed some extremely absurd clocks or other,—I would order those same clocks to be placed on a pillar of scorn; ' come, see, good people,' I would say, ' what you must not do.' Kulíbin is not to blame in the matter, but his work is worthless. To praise Telúsh-

[1] A character in Ostróvsky's famous drama, "The Thunderstorm;" a self-taught genius of a clockmaker.—TRANSLATOR.

kin, because he climbed the spire of the Admiralty, for his daring and skill—that is permissible; why should not he be praised? But it is not proper to shout out something to the effect, 'Has n't he made a laughing-stock of the foreign architects? and what 's the good of them? they only take your money.' . . He did not make a laughing-stock of them at all: afterward they were obliged to erect a scaffolding around the spire, and repair it in the ordinary way. For God's sake, do not encourage such ideas among us in Russia, as that anything can be attained without teaching! No; though you be as wise as Solomon, yet learn, learn from the alphabet up! Otherwise, sit down, and hang your tail between your legs! Faugh! I 've even got heated!"

Potúgin took off his hat, and fanned himself with his handkerchief.

"Russian art," he began again:—"Russian art! . . I know all about Russian limitations, and I know Russian impotency also, but as for Russian art, excuse me, but I have never met with it. For twenty years in succession we bowed down before that bloated cipher, Briullóff, and imagined, if you please, that a school had been founded among us, and that it was even destined to be better than all the others. . . Russian art, ha-ha-ha! ho-ho!"

"But permit me, Sozónt Ivánitch," remarked

Litvínoff.—" That means that you do not recognise Glínka either?"

Potúgin scratched behind his ear.

" Exceptions, you know, only prove the rule, but even in this case we could not get along without bragging! If you were to say, for example, that Glínka really was a remarkable musician, who was prevented by circumstances, external and internal, from becoming the founder of the Russian opera, no one would dispute you; but no; how is that possible! It immediately becomes necessary to promote him to be commander-in-chief, chief marshal of the Court in the department of music, and rob other nations by the way: ' they have nothing of the sort, if you please,' and then you have pointed out to you some ' mighty ' home-bred genius, whose compositions are nothing more than a sorry imitation of second-class foreign workers—second-class, precisely that: they are more easily imitated. Nothing of the sort. Oh, wretched fools and savages, for whom there exists no heritage of art, and artists—something in the style of Rappeau: as much as to say, a foreigner can lift six *puds* with one hand, but our man can lift twelve! Nothing of the sort! Let me inform you that I cannot get the following memory out of my head. This spring I visited the Crystal Palace, in the suburbs of London; in that palace, as you are aware, there is something in the nature of an exhibition of everything

to which man's inventiveness has attained,—the encyclopædia of humanity, it must be called. Well, sir, I walked and walked past all those machines and implements, and statues of great men; and all the while I was thinking: if a decree were issued to the effect that, together with the disappearance from the face of the earth of any nation, everything which that nation had invented should immediately vanish from the Crystal Palace,—our dear mother, Orthodox Russia, might sink down to the nethermost hell, and not a single tack, not a single pin, would be disturbed, the dear creature: everything would remain quite calmly in its place, because even the samovár, and linden-bast slippers, and the shaft-arch, and the knout—those renowned products of ours—were not invented by us. It would not be possible to try a similar experiment with the Sandwich Islands even; their inhabitants have invented some sort of boats and spears: visitors would notice their absence. That is calumny! that is too harsh—you may say. . . But I say: in the first place, I do not know how to censure with a grumble; in the second, it is evident that no one can make up his mind to look not merely the devil, but himself, straight in the eye, and it is not the children only, with us, who like to be lulled to sleep. Our ancient inventions were brought to us from the East, our new ones we have dragged over, after a fashion, from the

West, and yet we continue to chatter about independent Russian art! Some daring persons have even discovered a Russian science: 'with us, if you please, twice two make four, but somehow it comes out in a more dashing way.'"

"But stay, Sozónt Iványitch," exclaimed Litvínoff.—"Stay! Surely, we send something to the International Expositions, and Europe procures some supplies from us."

"Yes, raw material, raw products. And observe, my dear sir: our raw material is chiefly good, only because it depends upon other, and very evil circumstances: our bristles, for example, are large and stiff merely because the pigs are poor; our hides are firm and thick, because the cows are thin; our tallow is fat, because it is boiled half and half with the beef. . . However, why am I dilating to you about this? Surely you, who occupy yourself with technology, must know all these things better than I do. People say to me: 'inventiveness! Russian inventiveness!' There are our landed proprietors complaining bitterly, and suffering loss, because no satisfactory grain-dryer exists, which would relieve them of the necessity of placing their sheaves of grain in the kiln, as in the days of Rúrik: those kilns are frightfully detrimental, no better than linden-bast slippers, or bast mats, and they are constantly burning down. The landed proprietors complain, and still the grain-dryer does not make

its appearance. And why not? Because the foreigner does not need it; he grinds his grain raw, consequently does not bother about inventing one, and we . . . are not capable of doing it! Not capable of doing it—and that 's the end of the matter! You might try it! I vow, that from this day forth, as soon as a born genius or a self-taught man drops down on me, I shall say to him—' halt, my respected sir! and where 's that grain-dryer? Hand it over! ' But how can they? We are capable of picking up an old patched shoe, which long ago fell from the foot of Saint-Simon or Fourier, and placing it respectfully on our head, treating it like a holy thing; or of scribbling an article about the historical and contemporary significance of the proletariat in the principal cities of France—that also we can do; but I once tried to suggest to a writer and political economist, after the fashion of your Mr. Voroshíloff, to name to me twenty towns in that same France, and do you know the result? The result was, that the political economist, in despair, finally mentioned, among the towns of France, Mont Fermeil, probably recalling Paul de Kock's romance. And the following experience occurred to me. One day I was making my way, with gun and dog, through the forest. . ."

" And are you a sportsman? " inquired Litvínoff.

" I shoot a little. I was making my way to

a marsh in search of quail; other sportsmen had told me about that marsh. I looked, and in the midst of a field, in front of a cottage, sat a merchant's clerk, fresh and lusty as a husked nut,—sat there grinning, I did not know at what. And I asked him: 'Where is the marsh,' said I, 'and are there quail in it?'—'Certainly, certainly,' he drawled slowly, and with an expression as though I had presented him with a ruble; 'with great pleasure, sir: it 's a first-class marsh; but as for all sorts of wild birds—my God!—there 's a capital abundance of them also.' I went off, but I not only did not find a single wild bird,—the marsh itself had dried up long before. Now tell me, if you please, why does the Russian man lie? Why does the political economist lie, and about wild-fowl, to boot?"

Litvínoff made no reply, and only sighed sympathetically.

"And start a conversation with that political economist," resumed Potúgin:—"about the most difficult problems of social science, only, in general terms, without facts . . phrrrr! and the bird will soar off like an eagle! But I once succeeded in catching a bird of that sort: I employed a good visible bait, as you will see. We were talking with one of our present-day 'new youngsters,' about divers questions, as they express it. Well, sir, he flew into a great rage, as is usual; among other things, he rejected marriage, with truly

childish obstinacy. I suggested to him arguments of one sort and another . . . it was like knocking my head against a wall! I saw that it was impossible to approach him from that quarter. And suddenly a happy thought flashed across me! 'Permit me to inform you,' I began, —one must always address the 'minnows' with respect—'that I am amazed at you, my dear sir; you are interested in the natural sciences—and hitherto you have not noted the fact that all carnivorous and rapacious animals, birds and beasts, all those who are obliged to sally forth in search of prey, and toil over procuring live food for themselves and their offspring . . . and, of course, you reckon man in the list of such animals?'—'Of course I do,' replied the 'minnow': 'man, after all, is nothing but a carnivorous animal.'—'And a rapacious one,' I added.—'And a rapacious one,' he assented.—'That is very well said,' I assented. 'So, then, I am amazed that you have not observed that all such animals stick to monogamy?' The new youngster shuddered.—'How so?'—'Why, just so. Recall the lion, the wolf, the fox, the vulture, the hawk; and be so good as to consider how could they act otherwise? The two of you can hardly feed the children, as it is.'—My 'minnow' fell to thinking.—'Well,' says he, 'in that case, the beast is no model for man.' —'Then I called him an idealist, and how angry he became! He almost wept. I was obliged to

soothe him, and to promise him that I would not betray him to his comrades. Is it a small thing to deserve the name of idealist? And therein lies the joke, that the present young generation has made a mistake in its calculations. It has imagined that the day of old-fashioned, dark, underground toil is past, that it was all well enough for their aged fathers to dig like tortoises; but for us such a rôle is humiliating, if you please, we will act in the open air, we will act. . . The dear innocents! and even your children will not act; and would n't you like to go back to the cave, to the cave again, in the footprints of the old men?"

A brief silence ensued.

"I, my dear sir, am of this opinion," Potúgin began again:—"that we are indebted to civilisation not alone for knowledge, art, and law, but for the fact that even the very sentiment of beauty and poetry is developed and enters into force under the influence of that same civilisation; and that so-called national, ingenuous, unconscious, creative genius is stuff and nonsense. Even in Homer traces are already discernible of a refined and wealthy civilisation; even love is ennobled thereby. The Slavyanophils would gladly hang me for such a heresy if they were not such tender-hearted creatures; but, nevertheless, I insist upon my view—and however much they may regale me with Madame Kokhanóvsky and 'The Hive at Rest,' I will not inhale that *triple extrait*

de mougik russe; for I do not belong to the highest society, which finds it indispensably necessary, from time to time, to assure itself that it has not become completely Frenchified, and for whose special use that literature *en cuir de Russie* is composed. Try the experiment of reading to the common people—the genuine populace—the most incisive, the most 'national' passages from the 'Hive'; they will think you are communicating some new plot about usury or hard drinking. I repeat it, without civilisation there is no poetry. Would you like to obtain an illustration of the unpoetic ideal of the uncivilised Russian man? Open our epic songs, our legends. I am not talking now about the fact that love always is represented in them as the result of witchcraft, of sorcery—is produced by drinking 'a love-philtre,' and is even called soldering, chilblain; neither am I referring to the fact that our so-called epic literature alone, among all the others, European and Asiatic,—alone, observe,—has not presented—unless you count Vánka-Tánka as such—a single typical pair of loving human beings; that the paladin of Holy Russia always begins his acquaintance with his fated affinity by beating her 'mercilessly' on her white body—whence 'also the feminine sex lives swollen up'; of all that I will not speak; but permit me to direct your attention to that elegant specimen of youth, the *jeune premier,* as he was depicted by the imagi-

nation of the primitive, uncivilised Slavonian. Here, be pleased to note, comes the leading lover; he has made himself a nice little cloak of marten-fur, stitched along all the seams: a belt of the seven silks is girt about him just under the armpits, and the collar of the cloak is made higher than his head; from the front his ruddy face, from the back his white neck is not visible, his cap rests on one ear, and on his feet are morocco boots, with awl-like toes, his heels are pointed,—around the little tips an egg might roll; under the high heels a sparrow might fly and flutter.—And the dashing young fellow walks with a short, mincing step, that famous 'flaunting' gait, wherewith our Alcibiades, Tchurílo Plenkóvitch, produced such a wonderful, almost medicinal effect on the old women and the young maidens, that same gait wherewith, down to the present day, our waiters, limbered in every joint, that cream, that flower of Russian foppishness, that *nec plus ultra* of Russian taste, trip about in so inimitable a manner. I am not saying this in jest: dawdling dash is our artistic ideal. Well, is the picture true? Does it contain many materials for painting, for sculpture? And the beauty who fascinates the young men, and whose 'blood in her face is as though in that of a hare?' . . . . . But, apparently, you are not listening to me?"

Litvínoff started. He really had not heard what Potúgin had been saying to him: he had

been thinking, importunately thinking about Irína, about his last meeting with her. . .

"Excuse me, Sozónt Iványitch," he began:—"but I want to put my former question to you once more, about . . . about Madame Ratmíroff."

Potúgin folded his newspaper, and thrust it into his pocket.

"Again you wish to know how I became acquainted with her?"

"No, not that; I should like to hear your opinion . . . about the part which she has played in Petersburg. As a matter of fact, what was that part?"

"But I really do not know what to say to you, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch. I became pretty intimately acquainted with Madame Ratmíroff . . . . . but quite accidentally, and not for long. I have never taken a peep into her society, and what took place there has remained unknown to me. People have chattered somewhat in my presence, but you know scandal reigns among us not in democratic circles only. Moreover, I never had the curiosity to inquire. But I perceive," he added, after a brief pause:—"that she interests you."

"Yes; we have had a couple of pretty frank conversations. Still, I ask myself: Is she sincere?"

Potúgin dropped his eyes.—"When she gets

carried away—she is sincere, like all passionate women. Pride also sometimes keeps her from lying."

"But is she proud? I should suppose, rather—that she is capricious."

"As proud as the devil; but that 's nothing."

"It seems to me that she sometimes exaggerates. . ."

"That 's nothing, either; she is sincere, all the same. Well, and speaking in general, from whom would you care to have the truth? The very best of those young noble ladies are corrupt to the very marrow of their bones."

"But, Sozónt Ivánitch, call to mind, did not you call yourself her friend? Was it not you who, almost by force, took me to her?"

"What of that? She asked me to get you: why not? But I really am her friend. She is not devoid of good qualities: she is very kind—that is to say, generous,—that is to say, she gives to others that which she does not need herself. However, you certainly must know her quite as well as I do."

"I used to know Irína Pávlovna ten years ago; but since then . . ."

"Ekh, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, what are you saying? Do people's characters change? As they are in the cradle, so they are in the grave. Or, perhaps . . . ."—Here Potúgin bent still lower;

—" perhaps you are afraid of falling into her hands? That really . . . well, you cannot avoid falling into some one's hands."

Litvínoff laughed in a constrained way.—" You think so?"

" You cannot avoid it. Man is weak, woman is strong, chance is all-powerful; it is difficult to reconcile one's self to a colourless existence, it is impossible wholly to forget one's self . . . but yonder is beauty and sympathy—yonder is warmth and light,—why resist? And you run to it like a child to its nurse. Well, and afterward, of course, there is cold, and darkness, and emptiness . . as is proper. And the end of it is, that you will grow unused to everything, you will cease to understand anything. At first you will not understand how it is possible to love; and afterward you will not understand how it is possible to live."

Litvínoff looked at Potúgin, and it seemed to him that never before had he met a more solitary, a more deserted . . . . a more unhappy man. On this occasion he was not timid, he did not stand on ceremony; all despondent and pale, with his head on his breast, and his hands on his knees, he sat motionless, and merely smiled a melancholy smile. Litvínoff felt sorry for this poor, queer, splenetic fellow.

" Irína Pávlovna mentioned to me, among

other things," he began in a low tone,—"one of her intimate friends, whom she called, I think, Madame Byélsky or Dólsky. . ."

Potúgin cast his sorrowful eyes on Litvínoff.

"Ah!" he exclaimed in a dull tone. . . "She mentioned her . . . well, and what of it? However," he added, with an unnatural sort of yawn: "I must go home—to dinner. I ask your pardon."

He sprang up from the bench and moved rapidly away before Litvínoff could manage to utter a word. . . His pity gave way to vexation—vexation at himself, of course. Every sort of indiscretion was unnatural to him; he had wished to express his sympathy for Potúgin and the result had been something in the nature of an awkward hint. With secret dissatisfaction at heart, he returned to his hotel.

"Corrupt to the very marrow of their bones," he thought some time later . . . "but proud as the devil! She, that woman, who is almost on her knees before me, proud? proud, not capricious?"

Litvínoff tried to expel Irína's image from his head, but did not succeed. For that very reason, also, he did not recall his affianced bride; he felt to-day that image would not surrender its place. He resolved to await the solution of all this "strange affair," without troubling himself fur-

ther; the solution could not be long delayed, and Litvínoff had not the slightest doubt that it would be of the most abundant and natural sort. So he thought, but, in the meantime, it was not Irína's image alone which would not leave him—all her words recurred in turn to his memory.

A waiter brought him a note: it was from Irína.

"If you have nothing to do this evening, come: I shall not be alone; I have guests—and you will have a closer view of us, of our society. I am very anxious that you should see them: I have a premonition that they will display themselves in all their glory. And you ought to know what sort of air I breathe. Come; I shall be glad to see you, and you are not bored [Irína meant to say: you will not be bored]. Prove to me that our explanation of to-day has rendered impossible any misunderstanding between us. Faithfully yours, I."

Litvínoff put on his dress suit and a white tie, and went to Irína's. "All this is of no importance," he kept repeating to himself, in thought, on the way,—"but take a look at *them* . . . why should not I take a look? It is curious." A few days previously these same people had aroused in him a different feeling: they had aroused his indignation.

He walked with hurried steps, with his hat pulled far down over his eyes, with a constrained smile on his lips, and Bambáeff, who was sitting

in front of Weber's Café, and pointed him out from a distance to Voroshíloff and Pishtchálkin, exclaimed enthusiastically: "Do you see that man? He 's stone! He 's a rock!! He 's granite! ! !"

XV

Litvínoff found quite a number of guests at Irína's. In a corner, at the card-table, sat three of the generals of the picnic: the fat, the irritable, and the condescending ones. They were playing whist with a dummy, and there are no words in human language wherewith to express the pompousness with which they dealt, took tricks, played clubs, played diamonds . . . . . just like statesmen! Leaving to plebeians, *aux bourgeois,* the comments and adages customary during a game, the generals uttered only the most indispensable words; but the fat general permitted himself between two deals to say, with energetic distinctness: *" Ce satané as de pique!"* Among the visitors Litvínoff recognised the ladies who had taken part in the picnic; but there were others also whom he had not hitherto seen. One was so old that it seemed as though she must collapse immediately: she was wriggling her dreadful bare, dark-grey shoulders about,—and covering her mouth with her fan; she was casting sidelong glances at Ratmíroff, with her already quite dead eyes; he was paying court to her; she was greatly respected in high society

as the last Maid of Honour of the Empress Katherine II. By the window, dressed as a shepherdess, sat Countess Sh., "the Tzarítza of the Wasps," surrounded by young men; among them, distinguished by his arrogant bearing, his perfectly flat skull, and his soullessly-brutal expression of countenance, worthy of a Khan of Bokhará or of a Roman Heliogabalus, was Fínikoff, famous for his wealth and his good looks; another lady, also a Countess, and known by the diminutive name of *Lise,* was chatting with a long-haired blond, pale "spirit-medium"; beside them stood a gentleman, also pale and long-haired, sneering significantly: this gentleman was also a believer in spiritualism, but busied himself, in addition, with prophecy, and, on the foundation of the Apocalypse and the Talmud, foretold all sorts of remarkable events; not one of these events took place,—but he was not discomfited, and went on prophesying. That same heaven-born genius who had aroused such ire in Potúgin had placed himself at the piano; he was striking chords in an absent-minded way, *d'une main distraite,* and carelessly gazing about him. Irína was sitting on the divan between Prince Kokó and Madame X., formerly renowned as the beauty and wit of All-Russia, and who had long ago turned into a worthless wrinkled mushroom, whence exhaled an odour of fast-tide oil and putrid poison. On catching sight of Litvínoff,

Irína blushed, rose, and when he approached her, pressed his hand warmly. She wore a black crape gown, with barely visible gold embellishments; her shoulders gleamed with a dull whiteness, and her face, which was also pale beneath the momentary wave of crimson which had swept over it, breathed forth the triumph of beauty, and not of beauty only: a secret, almost mocking joy, sparkled in her half-closed eyes, quivered around her lips and nostrils. . .

Ratmíroff approached Litvínoff, and after exchanging with him the customary greetings, which were not, however, accompanied by his habitual playfulness, presented him to two or three ladies: to the aged ruin, to the Empress of the Wasps, to Countess Liza. . . They received him with a tolerable amount of graciousness. Litvínoff did not belong to their set . . . but he was not ill-looking, even very far from it, and the expressive features of his youthful face aroused their attention. Only he did not understand how to rivet this attention on himself; he had grown disused to society, and felt somewhat embarrassed, and then, too, the fat general had fixed his eyes on him. "Aha! the civilian! the free-thinker!" that immovable, heavy glance seemed to say: "so he has crawled into our society; please let me kiss your hand," says he. Irína came to Litvínoff's rescue. She managed matters so cleverly that he found himself in a corner, near the door,

a little behind her. When she addressed him she was obliged every time to turn toward him, and every time he admired the beautiful curve of her gleaming neck he inhaled the delicate perfume of her hair. The expression of profound and silent gratitude never left her face: he could not but admit that it was precisely gratitude which was expressed by those smiles, those glances, and he also began to seethe all over with the same sentiment, and he felt ashamed, yet found it sweet and painful . . . and at the same time she seemed constantly desirous of saying: "Well? What do you think of this?" This wordless question became audible to Litvínoff with especial clearness every time any of those present uttered or perpetrated a stupidity, and this happened more than once in the course of the evening. Once, even, she could not contain herself, and laughed aloud.

Countess Liza, a very superstitious lady and inclined to everything extraordinary, after having talked her fill to the light-haired medium about Hume, table-tipping, self-playing accordeons, and the like, wound up by asking him whether any animals existed upon whom magnetism produced an effect.

"One such animal exists, at any rate," remarked Prince Kokó from a distance.—"You know Milanóvsky, I believe? They put him to sleep in my presence, and he even snored, aï, aï!"

"You are very malicious, *mon prince;* I am talking about real animals, *je parle des bêtes.*"

"*Mais moi aussi, madame, je parle d'une bête. . .*"

"There are real animals also," interposed the spiritualist;—"for example—crabs; they are very nervous, and easily fall into a cataleptic state."

The Countess was amazed.—"What? Crabs! Is it possible? Akh, that is extremely curious! How I should like to see it! Monsieur Lúzhin," she added, addressing a young man with a stony face, such as new dolls have, and stony collar (he was famed for having wet that same face and collar with dashes of Niagara and the Nubian Nile, but he remembered nothing about all his travels, and loved only Russian puns . . . .), "Monsieur Lúzhin, be so good as to get us a crab."

Monsieur Lúzhin grinned.—"A live one or only a lively one?" he inquired.

The Countess did not understand him.—"*Mais oui,* a crab," she repeated, "*une écrevisse.*"

"What—what 's the meaning of this?—a crab? a crab?" interposed Countess Sh. sternly. The absence of Monsieur Verdier irritated her: she could not understand why Irína had not invited that most charming of Frenchmen. The ruin, who had long ago ceased to understand any-

thing,—in addition to which, deafness had seized upon her,—only waggled her head.

"*Oui, oui, vous allez voir.* Monsieur Lúzhin, please . . . ."

The young traveller bowed, left the room, and speedily returned. A waiter followed him, and grinning to the full extent of his mouth, bore a platter whereon was visible a large black crab.

"*Voici, madame,*" exclaimed Lúzhin;—"now you can set about the operation on the crab.[1] Ha, ha, ha!" (Russians are always the first to laugh at their own witticisms.)—"He, he, he!" echoed Prince Kokó, in the quality of a patriot and patron of all national products.

(We beg the reader not to feel astonished and not to get angry: who can answer for himself, that, when seated in the parterre of the Alexandrínsky Theatre, and invaded by its atmosphere, he will not perpetrate even a worse pun?)

"*Merci, merci,*" said the Countess.—"*Allons, allons, Monsieur Fox, montrez-nous ça.*"

The waiter placed the platter on a small round table. A slight movement ensued among the guests; several necks were outstretched; only the generals at the card-table preserved the serene solemnity of their pose. The medium rumpled up his hair, frowned, and approaching the table, began to make passes with his hands in the air: the crab bristled up, drew back, and elevated its

[1] The word also means *cancer* in Russian.—Translator.

claws. The medium repeated and quickened his motions: the crab bristled as before.

"*Mais que doit-elle donc faire?*" inquired the Countess.

"*Elle doâ rester immobile et se dresser sur sa quiou,*" replied Mr. Fox, with a strong American accent, convulsively agitating his fingers over the platter; but the magnetism did not act, the crab continued to move about. The medium announced that he was not at his best, and retreated from the table with a dissatisfied aspect. The Countess undertook to console him, asserting that similar failures sometimes happened, even with Monsieur Hume. . . Prince Kokó confirmed her words. The expert in the Apocalypse and the Talmud stole up to the table on the sly, and poking his fingers swiftly, but violently, in the direction of the crab, also tried his luck, but without success: no symptoms of catalepsy manifested themselves. Then the waiter was summoned, and ordered to remove the crab, which command he obeyed, grinning to the full capacity of his mouth, as before; he could be heard to snort outside the door. . . . In the kitchen, later on, there was a great deal of laughter *über diese Russen.* The born genius had continued to strike chords during the whole time of the experiment with the crab, keeping to minor tones, because, you know, no one could tell what would prove effectual in that case,—then the born genius

played his inevitable waltz, and, of course, received the most flattering approval. Carried away by the spirit of emulation, Count X., our incomparable dilettante (see Chapter I), "recited" a chansonette of his own invention, stolen entire from Offenbach. Its playful refrain on the words "*Quel œuf? quel bœuf?*" made the heads of almost all the ladies roll to right and to left; one even moaned gently, and the irresistible, inevitable "*Charmant! charmant!*" flitted across every one's mouth. Irína exchanged a glance with Litvínoff, and again that mysterious, mocking expression hovered about her lips. . . . But it came more powerfully into action a little later, —it even assumed a malevolent cast,—when Prince Kokó, that representative and defender of the interests of the nobility, took it into his head to set forth his views to that same medium, and, as a matter of course, immediately made use of his famous phrase about the shock to property in Russia, in which connection, incidentally, democracy caught it. The American blood in the medium made itself felt; he began to argue. The Prince, as was fitting, immediately began to shout, at the top of his voice, in place of proofs incessantly repeating: "*C'est absurde! cela n'a pas le sens commun!*" The wealthy Fínikoff began to utter impertinences, without stopping to think to whom they applied; the Talmudist set up a squeak; even Countess Sh. took to rattling.

. . . In short, there arose almost identically the same detestable uproar as at Gubaryóff's; only, in this case, there were no beer and tobacco-smoke, and all present were better dressed. Ratmíroff endeavoured to restore silence (the generals had expressed dissatisfaction, an exclamation from Borís had made itself audible: "*Encore cette satanée politique!*"), but the effort proved fruitless; and a dignitary who was present, one of the softly-penetrating sort, on undertaking to present *le resumé de la question en peu de mots,* suffered defeat; it is true that he so mumbled and repeated himself, so evidently did not know how either to hear or answer objections, and so indubitably did not himself know precisely in what *la question* consisted, that no other issue could have been expected; and Irína, too, urged on the wranglers on the sly, and hounded them one upon the other, constantly glancing at Litvínoff, and nodding her head slightly at him. . . And he sat there as though bewitched, heard nothing, and only waited for those magnificent eyes to flash upon him once again, for that pale, tender, mischievous, charming face to flit once more across his vision. . . The end of it was that the ladies rebelled, and demanded that the dispute should cease. . Ratmíroff invited the dilettante to repeat his chansonette, and the born genius played his waltz again. . .

Litvínoff remained until after midnight, and

took his departure later than all the others. The conversation had touched upon many topics during the course of the evening, sedulously avoiding everything which was in the slightest degree interesting; the generals, after they had finished their majestic game, had majestically joined in it: the influence of these statesmen immediately made itself felt. A conversation was in progress about the notorieties of the Parisian *demi-monde,* with whose names and talents every one appeared to be intimately acquainted, about Sardou's last play, about About's romance, about Patti in "Traviata." Some one suggested that they play at "secretary," *au secretaire:* but this was not a success. The replies were insipid, and not devoid of grammatical errors; the fat general told how he, on one occasion, in answer to the question, *Qu'est ce que l'amour?* had replied: *Une colique remontée au cœur,* and immediately began to laugh with his wooden laugh; the ruin, with a sweeping gesture, tapped him with her fan on the arm; a bit of whitewash fell off of her forehead at this vigorous gesture. The dried mushroom undertook to recall the Slavonic principalities and the indispensability of an Orthodox propaganda beyond the Danube, but finding no echo, began to hiss, and withdrew into the background. In fact, they talked more about Hume than about anything else; even the "Empress of the Wasps" narrated how hands had crept

over her, and how she had seen them, and had put her own ring on one of them. In truth, Irína triumphed: even if Litvínoff had paid more attention to what was being said around him, still he would not have carried away a single sincere word, a single intelligent thought, or a single new fact out of all that incoherent and lifeless chatter. No enthusiasm was audible even in the cries and exclamations; even in the reproaches no passion was to be felt: only from time to time, from beneath the mask of pseudo-civic indignation, pseudo-scornful indifference, did the fear of possible losses give forth a shriek, and a few names, which posterity will not forget, were uttered with gnashings of teeth. . . . And not one drop of living current beneath all this rubbish and litter! What ancient stuff, what useless nonsense, what insipid trifles absorbed all those brains, those souls, and absorbed them not on that one evening only, not only in society, but at home, at all hours, every day, in all the breadth and depth of their beings! And what ignorance, in conclusion! What lack of comprehension of everything upon which human life is founded, by which it is adorned!

As she took leave of Litvínoff, Irína slightly pressed his hand, and significantly whispered: "Well, what do you think of it? Are you satisfied? Have you sufficiently admired? Is it

nice?" He made her no reply, but merely bowed silently and low.

When she was left alone with her husband Irína was on the point of retiring to her bedroom. . . He stopped her.

"*Je vous ai beaucoup admirée ce soir, madame,*"—he said, as he lighted a cigarette, and leaned his elbows on the mantelpiece:—"*vous vous êtes parfaitement moquée de nous tous.*"

"*Pas plus cette fois-ci que les autres,*"—she replied indifferently.

"How do you wish me to understand that?"—inquired Ratmíroff.

"As you please."

"H'm. *C'est clair.*"—Ratmíroff cautiously, in a feline way, knocked the ashes from his cigarette with the long nail of his little finger.—"Yes, by the way! That new acquaintance of yours—what 's his name? . . . Mr. Litvínoff—must enjoy the reputation of being a very clever man."

At Litvínoff's name Irína turned swiftly round.

"What do you mean?"

The general grinned.

"He never utters a word; . . . evidently, he 's afraid of compromising himself."

Irína laughed also, only not at all in the same way as her husband.

"It is better to hold one's tongue than to talk . . . . as some people do."

"*Attrapé!*"—said Ratmíroff, with feigned humility.—"Jesting aside, he has a very interesting face. Such a . . . concentrated expression . . and, altogether, a bearing. . . . Yes."—The general adjusted his necktie, and throwing back his head, scrutinised his own moustache.—"I assume that he is a republican, after the fashion of that other friend of yours, Mr. Potúgin; he 's another of the clever men who are taciturn."

Irína's brows slowly elevated themselves above the widely-opened, brilliant eyes, and her lips became compressed, almost contorted.

"What is your object in saying this, Valerián Vladímiritch?"—she remarked, as though sympathetically.—"You are only wasting your powder on the empty air. . . We are not in Russia, and no one is listening to us."

Ratmíroff writhed.

"That is not my opinion only, Irína Pávlovna,"—he began, with a voice that, somehow, seemed suddenly to have become guttural:—"others also think that that gentleman looks like a carbonaro. . ."

"Really? And who are those others?"

"Why, Borís, for example. . ."

"What? And that fellow must needs express his opinion?"

Irína shrugged her shoulders, as though shuddering from cold, and softly passed the tips of her fingers over them.

"That fellow . . . yes, that fellow . . that

fellow. Permit me to inform you, Irína Pávlovna, you appear to be losing your temper; and you know yourself that the person who loses his temper . . . ."

"I am losing my temper? For what reason?"

"I don't know; perhaps the remark displeases you which I permitted myself to make concerning . . . ."

Ratmíroff began to stammer.

"Concerning?"—repeated Irína inquiringly. —"Akh, pray omit irony and speak more quickly. I am tired, I am sleepy."—She took a candle from the table.—"Concerning? . . ."

"Well, concerning that same Mr. Litvínoff. As there is no longer any doubt that you take a very great interest in him . . ."

Irína raised the hand in which she held the candlestick; the flame came on a level with her husband's face, and, after looking him straight in the eye, with attention and almost with curiosity, she suddenly burst out laughing.

"What 's the matter with you?"—asked Ratmíroff, with a scowl.

Irína continued to laugh.

"Come, what is it?" he repeated, and stamped his foot.

He felt insulted, exasperated, yet, at the same time, the beauty of this woman, who stood there before him so lightly and so boldly, involuntarily surprised him . . . it tormented him. He saw

everything—all her charms, even the rosy gleam of the elegant nails on the delicate fingers, which firmly clasped the dark bronze of the heavy candlestick—even that gleam did not escape him . . . and the insult ate still more deeply into his heart. But Irína went on laughing.

"What? You? You are jealous?"—she said, at last, and turning her back on her husband, she left the room.—"He is jealous!"—was audible outside the door, and again her laughter rang out.

Ratmíroff gazed gloomily after his wife,—even then he could not fail to observe the enchanting grace of her figure, of her movements,—and crushing his cigarette with a heavy blow against the marble slab of the chimney-piece, he flung it far from him. His cheeks suddenly paled, a convulsive quiver flitted across his chin, and his eyes wandered dully and fiercely over the floor, as though in search of something. . . . Every trace of elegance had vanished from his face. That must have been the sort of expression it had assumed when he flogged the white Russian peasants.

But Litvínoff came to himself in his own room, and seating himself on a chair by the table, he clutched his head in both hands, and, for a long time, remained motionless. He rose, at last, opened a drawer, and taking out a portfolio, drew from an inner pocket of it Tatyána's photo-

graph. Her face, distorted and, as usual, made to look older by the photograph, gazed sadly at him. Litvínoff's betrothed was a young girl of Great Russian descent, golden-haired, rather plump, and with somewhat heavy features, but with a wonderful expression of goodness and gentleness in the light-brown eyes, and a tender white brow, upon which the sunshine seemed always to linger. For a long time Litvínoff did not take his eyes from the picture: then he softly pushed it from him, and again clasped his head with both hands. "All is over!"—he whispered at last.—"Irína! Irína!"

It was only now, only at this moment, that he comprehended that he was irrevocably, madly in love with her, had fallen in love with her on the very day of his first meeting with her at the Old Château, that he never had ceased to love her. And yet how astonished he would have been, how incredulous; how he would have laughed if any one had told him that a few hours earlier.

"But Tánya, Tánya, my God! Tánya! Tánya!"—he kept repeating, with compunction; but Irína's image kept rising up before him in her black gown that looked like mourning, with the radiant tranquillity of conquest on her marble-white face.

XVI

Litvínoff did not sleep all night long, and did not undress. He felt very heavy at heart. As an honourable and upright man, he understood the importance of obligations, the sacredness of duty, and would have regarded it as a disgrace to deal disingenuously with himself, with his weakness, with his conduct. At first a torpor descended upon him: for a long time he could not free himself from the weight of a persistent, semi-conscious, obscure sensation; then terror took possession of him at the thought that the future, his future so nearly won, was again enveloped in gloom, that his house—his house which had but just been erected—was reeling to its fall. . . He began pitilessly to upbraid himself, but immediately put a stop to his own outbursts. "What dastardliness is this?"—he thought.—"This is no time for reproaches; I must act; Tánya is my affianced bride, she has trusted my love, my honour, we are united forever, and we cannot, we must not part." He set before himself, in vivid colours, all Tatyána's qualities, he mentally sorted them over and enumerated them; he tried to arouse in himself emotion and tenderness.

" There is but one thing left to do,"—he thought again:—" to flee, flee instantly, without waiting for her arrival, to flee to meet her, even if I shall suffer, even if I shall torture myself with Tánya, —which is improbable,—but, in any case, it is useless to argue about that, to take that into consideration; I must do my duty, even if I die afterward!—" But thou hast no right to deceive her," another voice whispered to him, " thou hast not the right to conceal from her the change which has taken place in thy feelings; perchance, on learning that thou hast fallen in love with another, she will not wish to become thy wife?" " Nonsense! Nonsense!" he retorted:—" All that is sophistry, shameful guile, false conscientiousness; I have no right not to keep my plighted word, that 's how the case stands. Well, very good. . . Then I must go away from here without seeing her. . ."

But at this point Litvínoff's heart contracted, a chill overcame him, a physical chill: a momentary shiver ran through his body, his teeth chattered. He stretched and yawned as though in a fever. Without insisting further on his last thought, stifling that thought, turning away from it, he began to feel perplexed and astonished that he could again have . . . again have fallen in love with that depraved, worldly creature, with all her repulsive, hostile surroundings. He tried to ask himself: " But hast thou fallen thor-

oughly, actually in love?" and could only wave his hand in despair. He still continued to feel surprised and perplexed, and lo! there before him, as though from a soft, fragrant mist, started forth the bewitching countenance, the starry eyelashes were raised—and silently, irresistibly, the enchanting eyes penetrated his heart, and the voice rang out sweetly, and the gleaming shoulders—the shoulders of a young empress—exhaled the freshness and the fervour of tenderness. . . .

Toward morning a decision matured, at last, in Litvínoff's soul. He decided to set out, on that very day, to meet Tatyána, and in a final interview with Irína to tell her, if it could not be avoided, the whole truth—and part from her forever.

He arranged and packed his things, waited until twelve o'clock, and went to her. But at the sight of her half-veiled windows, Litvínoff's heart seemed to sink within him . . . he lacked the courage to cross the threshold of the hotel. He walked several times up and down Lichtenthaler Avenue. "My respects to you, Mr. Litvínoff!"—suddenly rang out a mocking voice from the heights of a swiftly-rolling dog-cart. Litvínoff raised his eyes, and beheld General Ratmíroff seated beside Prince M., a well-known sportsman and lover of English equipages and horses.

The Prince was driving, but the general bent to one side and displayed his teeth, lifting his hat high above his head. Litvínoff bowed to him, and instantly, as though in obedience to a secret command, set out at a run for Irína.

She was at home. He ordered the servants to announce him: he was immediately received. When he entered she was standing in the middle of the room. She wore a loose morning gown, with wide, flowing sleeves; her face, pale as on the preceding day, but not fresh as it had then been, expressed weariness; the languid smile with which she greeted her guest still more clearly defined that expression. She offered him her hand, and gazed at him affectionately but abstractedly.

"Thank you for coming,"—she began, in a mournful voice, and sank into an arm-chair.—"I do not feel quite well to-day; I passed a bad night. Well, what have you to say about last evening? Was not I right?"

Litvínoff seated himself.

"I have come to you, Irína Pávlovna,"—he began . . .

She instantly straightened herself up and turned round; her eyes fairly bored into Litvínoff.

"What is the matter with you?"—she exclaimed.—"You are as pale as a corpse—you are ill. What is the matter with you?"

Litvínoff became confused.

"With me, Irína Pávlovna?"

"You have received bad news? A catastrophe has happened, tell me, tell me. . ."

Litvínoff, in his turn, stared at Irína.

"I have received no bad news,"—he said, not without an effort:—"but a catastrophe has really happened, a great catastrophe . . . and it has brought me to you."

"A catastrophe? What is it?"

"Such a one . . . . . that . . . ."

Litvínoff tried to go on . . . and could not. But he clasped his hands so hard that the fingers cracked. Irína bent forward, and seemed turned to stone.

"Akh! I love you!"—burst at last in a dull groan from Litvínoff's breast, and he turned away, as though desirous of hiding his face.

"What, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, you . . . ." Irína also was unable to finish her phrase, and leaning back in her chair, she raised both hands to her face.—"You . . . love me?"

"Yes . . . yes . . . yes,"—he repeated with exasperation, turning his face more and more aside.

All became silent in the room: a butterfly which had flown in, agitated its wings and struggled between the curtain and the window.

Litvínoff was the first to speak.

"This, Irína Pávlovna,"—he began:—"this is the catastrophe which has . . . stunned me,

which I ought to have foreseen and avoided, if I had not as in former days, in the Moscow time, fallen immediately into the whirlpool. Evidently, it has pleased fate to take me again unawares, and experience again, through you, those torments which, it would have seemed, ought never more to have been repeated. . . But I have resisted . . have tried to resist . . in vain; yes, plainly, what is fated to be cannot be avoided. But I am telling you all this for the purpose of putting an end, as soon as possible to this . . . this tragi-comedy,"—he added with a fresh access of exasperation and shame.

Again Litvínoff fell silent; the butterfly continued to struggle and flutter. Irína did not remove her hands from her face.

"And you are not deceiving yourself?"—her whisper became audible from beneath those white, seemingly bloodless hands.

"I am not deceiving myself,"—replied Litvínoff in a hollow voice.—"I love you as I have never loved, or loved any one but you. I am not going to reproach you: that would be too foolish; I will not repeat to you that perhaps nothing of this sort would have happened had you behaved differently toward me. . . . Of course, I alone am to blame, my self-confidence has been my undoing; but I am rightly chastised, and you could not possibly have expected this. Of course, you did not take into consideration that it would have

been far less dangerous for me if you had not felt your fault so vividly . . . your imaginary fault toward me, and had not wished to atone for it . . . but what is done cannot be undone, of course. . . I only wanted to explain to you my position: it is sufficiently painful as it is. . . At all events, there will be no misunderstanding, as you say, but the frankness of my confession will, I hope, mitigate that feeling of insult which you cannot fail to feel."

Litvínoff spoke without raising his eyes; and if he had glanced at Irína, still he could not have seen what was going on in her face, because, as before, she did not remove her hands. Nevertheless, what was taking place on her face would, in all probability, have amazed him: it expressed both fear and joy, and a certain blissful exhaustion and agitation; the eyes barely glimmered beneath the drooping lids, and the long-drawn, broken breathing chilled the lips which were parted as though in thirst. . . .

Litvínoff maintained silence, waited for a reply, a sound. . . Nothing!

"But one thing is left for me to do,"—he began again:—"to go away; I am come to bid you farewell."

Irína slowly dropped her hands upon her knees.

"But I remember, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch,"—she began:—"that . . that person, of whom you

spoke to me, was to come hither. You are expecting her?"

"Yes; but I shall write to her . . . she will stop somewhere on the way . . in Heidelberg, for instance."

"Ah! In Heidelberg. . . Yes. . It is pleasant there. . . But all this must disturb your plans. Are you sure, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, that you are not exaggerating, *et que ce n'est pas une fausse alarme?*"

Irína spoke quietly, almost coldly, and with little pauses, and glances aside, in the direction of the window. Litvínoff did not answer her last question.

"But why have you alluded to the insult?"—she went on.—"I am not insulted . . . oh, no! And if either of us is to blame, then, in any case, it is not you; not you alone. . . Remember our last conversations, and you will be convinced that it is not you."

"I have never had any doubt of your magnanimity,"—ejaculated Litvínoff through his teeth:—"but I should like to know: do you approve of my intention?"

"To go away?"

"Yes."

Irína continued to gaze to one side.

"At the first moment your intention seemed to me to be premature . . . but now I have thought over what you said . . . and if you

really are not making a mistake, then I suppose that you ought to go. It will be better so . . . better for both of us."

Irína's voice had grown more and more quiet, and her very speech became slower and slower.

"General Ratmíroff, really, might notice it," —Litvínoff began. . . .

Irína's eyes dropped again, and something strange flickered around her lips . . flickered and vanished.

"No, you do not understand me,"—she interrupted him.—"I was not thinking of my husband. Why should I? There would be nothing for him to notice. But, I repeat it: separation is indispensable for both of us."

Litvínoff took up his hat, which had fallen to the floor.

"Everything is over,"—he thought:—"I must go."—"And so it only remains for me to take leave of you, Irína Pávlovna,"—he said aloud, and suddenly dread fell upon him, exactly as though he were on the point of pronouncing his own sentence.—"I can only hope that you will not bear me any ill-will . . . . and that if, sometimes, we . . . ."

Again Irína interrupted him:

"Wait, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch, do not bid me farewell yet. That would be over-hasty."

Something quivered within Litvínoff, but a

burning bitterness surged up on the instant, and with redoubled force, in his heart.

"But I cannot remain!"—he exclaimed.—"To what end? Why prolong this anguish?"

"Do not bid me farewell yet,"—repeated Irína. . "I must see you once more. . . Again the same sort of dumb parting as in Moscow,—no, I will not have that. You may go now, but you must promise me, give me your word of honour, that you will not take your departure without having seen me once more."

"You wish that?"

"I demand it. If you go away without having taken leave of me, I will never, never forgive you. Do you hear: never!"—"It is strange!"—she added, as though speaking to herself:—"I cannot possibly realise that I am in Baden. . . I keep feeling that I am in Moscow. . . Go. ."

Litvínoff rose.

"Irína Pávlovna," he said,—"give me your hand."

Irína shook her head.

"I have told you that I will not bid you farewell. . ."

"I am not asking it for a farewell. . ."

Irína was on the point of giving him her hand, but glanced at Litvínoff for the first time since his confession,—and drew it back.

"No, no,"—she whispered,—"I will not give you my hand. No . . . no. Go."

Litvínoff bowed and left the room. He could not know why Irína had refused him a last friendly pressure. . . . . He could not know that she was afraid.

He left the room, and Irína again sank down in the arm-chair, and again covered her face.

XVII

Litvínoff did not return home: he went off to the mountains, and making his way into the density of the forest, threw himself on the earth, face downward, and lay there for about an hour. He did not suffer, he did not weep; he lay in a sort of painful, agonising swoon. Never before had he experienced anything of the sort: there was an intolerably aching, gnawing sensation of emptiness, of emptiness in himself, around him everywhere. . . He did not think either of Irína or of Tatyána. He felt one thing: the blow had fallen, and life had been cut in twain like a rope, and he was entirely drawn forward and seized upon by something unknown, yet cold. Sometimes it seemed to him that a whirlwind had descended upon him, and he felt its swift gyrations and the confused beatings of its dark pinions. . . But his decision did not waver. . Remain in Baden . . . such a thing was not even to be mentioned. Mentally, he had already taken his departure: he was already seated in the rattling and smoking railway-carriage, and fleeing, fleeing into the dumb, dead distance. He rose up, at last, and leaning his head against a tree, remained motionless; only

with one hand, without himself being conscious of it, he had grasped the highest frond of a fern, and was swaying it to and fro with a regular beat. The sound of approaching footsteps aroused him from his torpor; two charcoal-burners, with large sacks on their shoulders, were making their way along the steep path. "It is time!" whispered Litvínoff, and followed the charcoal-burners down the path to the town, turned into the railway building, and despatched a telegram to Tatyána's aunt, Kapitólina Márkovna. In this telegram he informed her of his immediate departure, and appointed a meeting with her in Schrader's hotel, in Heidelberg. "If an end is to be made, it had better be made at once,"—he thought;—"there is no use in deferring it until to-morrow." Then he entered the gaming-room, with dull curiosity stared two or three players in the face, descried from afar Bindásoff's hideous nape, Pishtchálkin's irreproachable face, and, after standing for a little while under the colonnade, he betook himself, without haste, to Irína. It was not at the instigation of a sudden, involuntary impulse that he went to her; when he had made up his mind to depart, he had also made it up to keep the word he had pledged, and to see her once again. He entered the hotel without being perceived by the door-porter, ascended the staircase without meeting any one, and, without knocking at the door, mechanically pushed it open, and en-

tered the room. In the room, in the same armchair, in the same gown, in the same attitude as three hours before, sat Irína. . . It was evident that she had not stirred from the spot, had not moved during all that time. She slowly raised her head, and on perceiving Litvínoff, shuddered all over, and grasped the arms of the chair.—"You have frightened me,"—she whispered.

Litvínoff regarded her with speechless amazement. The expression of her face, of her sunken eyes, impressed him.

Irína smiled in a forced way and adjusted her hair, which had fallen out of curl.

"It does not matter. . . I, really, I do not know. . I think I have been asleep here."

"Excuse me, Irína Pávlovna,"—began Litvínoff,—"I entered without being announced. . I wished to comply with what you were pleased to demand of me. And, as I am going away to-day . . ."

"To-day? But I thought you told me that you wished first to write a letter. . ."

"I have sent a telegram."

"Ah! You found it necessary to make haste. And when do you leave? At what o'clock, I mean?"

"At seven o'clock in the evening."

"Ah! At seven o'clock! And you have come to say farewell?"

"Yes, Irína Pávlovna, to say farewell."

Irína remained silent for a while.

"I must thank you, Grigóry Mikhaílitch; you probably did not find it easy to come hither."

"No, Irína Pávlovna, it was very far from easy."

"Life is not easy, altogether, Grigóry Mikhaílitch; what do you think?"

"That depends on the person, Irína Pávlovna."

Again Irína remained silent for a space, as though in meditation.

"You have shown your friendship for me by coming,"—she said, at last.—"I thank you. And, altogether, I entirely approve of your decision to make an end of it all as speedily as possible, . . . because every delay . . . because . . . because I, that very same I whom you accused of coquetry, whom you called a comedian,—I believe that was what you called me? . ."

Irína rose hastily, and seating herself in another arm-chair, bent over and pressed her face and hands against the edge of the table. . .

"Because I love you . . ." she whispered, through her tightly-clasped fingers.

Litvínoff staggered back, as though some one had struck him in the breast. Irína sadly turned her head away from him, as though desirous, in her turn, of hiding her face from him, and laid it on the table.

"Yes, I love you. . . . I love you . . . and you know it."

"I? I know it?"—Litvínoff uttered, at last. —"I?"

"Well, and now you see,"—pursued Irína,— "that you really must go, that there must be no delay,—that we, that I can suffer no delay. It is dangerous, it is terrible. . . Good-bye!" she added, rising impetuously from her chair.

She took several steps in the direction of the door to her boudoir, and thrusting her hand behind her back, she hastily moved it through the air, as though desirous of encountering and pressing Litvínoff's hand; but he stood, as though rooted to the spot, at a distance. . . . Once more she said, "Farewell, forget," and without glancing behind her, fled from the room.

Litvínoff was left alone, and still could not recover himself. He came to his senses at last, swiftly approached the door of the boudoir, uttering Irína's name once, twice, thrice. . . He had already laid his hand on the handle of the door. . . The ringing voice of Ratmíroff made itself audible from the porch of the hotel.

Litvínoff pulled his hat down over his eyes and went out to the staircase. The elegant general was standing in front of the porter's lodge, and explaining to him, in imperfect German, that he wished to hire a carriage for the whole of the following day. On catching sight of Litvínoff,

he again raised his hat abnormally high, and again expressed his " respect ": he was evidently scoffing at him, but Litvínoff cared nothing for that. He barely returned Ratmíroff's salutation, and on reaching his own quarters, he paused in front of his trunk, already packed and closed. His head was in a whirl, and his heart was quivering like a chord. What was to be done now? And could he have foreseen this?

Yes, he had foreseen it, incredible as it might seem. It had stunned him like a clap of thunder, but he had foreseen it, although he had not dared to admit it. But he had known nothing with certainty. Everything had got jumbled up within him; he had lost the thread of his own thoughts. He recalled Moscow, he recalled how " it " had descended upon him then like a sudden hurricane. He felt suffocated: ecstasy—but a desolate, hopeless ecstasy—choked and rent his breast. Not for anything in the world would he have consented that the words uttered by Irína should not really have been uttered by her. . . But what then? All the same, those words could not alter the resolution he had already taken. As before, it did not waver, but held firmly like an anchor which has been cast. Litvínoff had lost the thread of his thoughts . . . yes; but his will remained with him still, and he gave himself orders as he would have given them to a strange man, his subordinate. He rang the bell for a waiter,

ordered his bill to be brought, engaged a seat in the evening omnibus: he deliberately cut off all his roads. "Even if I die there afterward," he kept repeating, as he had done during the preceding sleepless night; this phrase was particularly to his taste.—"Even if I die there afterward," he repeated, as he slowly paced to and fro in his chamber, only closing his eyes and ceasing to breathe from time to time involuntarily when those words, those words of Irína invaded his soul, and seared it as with fire. "Evidently, one does not love twice," he thought: "another life has entered into yours, you have admitted it—you cannot rid yourself of that poison to the end, you cannot break those threads! Just so; but what does that prove? Happiness. . . Is that possible? You love her, let us assume . . . and she . . . she loves you. . ."

But at this point he was again compelled to take himself in hand. As a wayfarer, in a dark night, who descries ahead of him a tiny light and fears to lose his road, does not remove his eyes from it for an instant, so also Litvínoff unremittingly concentrated the full force of his attention upon one point, upon one goal. To present himself to his affianced bride, and even not actually to his bride (he tried not to think of her), but in the room of the Heidelberg hotel—that is what stood before him steadfastly, as his guiding light. What was to come afterward he did not know,

and did not wish to know. . . . One thing was indubitable: he would not turn back. " Even if I die there," he repeated for the tenth time, and glanced at his watch.

A quarter past six! How long he still had to wait! Again he strode back and forth. The sun was declining to its setting, the sky was glowing red over the trees, and a crimson twilight fell through the narrow windows into his darkening room. All at once it seemed to Litvínoff as though the door had been opened softly and swiftly behind him, and as swiftly closed again. . . He turned round; by the door, enveloped in a black mantilla, stood a woman. . .

" Irína! " he cried, and clasped his hands. . .

She raised her head, and fell upon his breast.

Two hours later he was seated on his divan. His trunk stood in a corner, open and empty, and on the table, amid articles scattered there in confusion, lay a letter from Tatyána which Litvínoff had just received. She wrote him that she had decided to hasten her departure from Dresden, as her aunt's health was entirely restored, and that if no obstacles intervened they would both arrive in Baden at twelve o'clock on the following day, and hoped that he would meet them at the railway station. Litvínoff had engaged apartments for them in the same hotel where he was stopping.

That same evening he sent a note to Irína, and on the following morning he received an answer from her. "A day sooner or a day later,"—she wrote, "it was inevitable. I repeat to thee what I said last night: my life is in thy hands, do with me as thou wilt. I do not wish to put any restraint upon thy freedom, but thou must know that, in case of necessity, I will abandon everything, and will follow thee to the ends of the earth. We shall see each other to-morrow, shall we not? Thy Irína."

The last two words were written in a large, bold, decided chirography.

XVIII

Among the persons who assembled, on the 18th of August, about twelve o'clock, on the platform of the railway station was Litvínoff. Not long before he had met Irína. She was sitting in an open carriage with her husband and another person, a gentleman already elderly. She had seen Litvínoff, and he had perceived it: something dark had flitted across her eyes, but she immediately concealed herself from him with her parasol.

A strange change had taken place in him since the preceding day—in his whole exterior, in his movements, in the expression of his face; and he himself felt that he was another man. His self-confidence had vanished, his composure had vanished also, along with his self-respect; nothing was left of his former spiritual state. Recent ineffaceable impressions had shut out everything else. A certain unprecedented sensation, strong, sweet—and malign, had made its appearance; a mysterious guest had made his way into the sanctuary, and had taken possession of it, and had lain down therein silently, but at full length, as master of the new domicile. Litvínoff no longer felt ashamed, he was afraid—and, at the same time,

a desperate hardihood was kindled within him; this mixture of conflicting feelings is familiar to captives, to the conquered; it is not unknown also to the thief, after he has robbed a church. But Litvínoff had been conquered—conquered suddenly; . . . and what had become of his honour?

The train was a few minutes late. Litvínoff's languor passed into torturing anguish: he could not stand still in one place, and, deathly pale, he squeezed and forced his way among the people. "My God," he thought, "if I might have just one more day. . ." His first glance at Tánya, Tánya's first glance . . . that was what alarmed him, that was what he must get through with as speedily as possible. . . And afterward? Afterward—come what might! . . . He no longer arrived at any decisions, he no longer answered for himself. His phrase of yesterday flashed painfully through his head. . . And that is how he is meeting Tánya. . .

A prolonged whistle resounded at last, a dull roar, which momentarily increased, became audible, and rolling slowly from behind the road-gates, the locomotive made its appearance. The crowd advanced to meet it, and Litvínoff advanced after it, dragging his feet like a condemned man. Faces, ladies' hats, began to show themselves from the carriages, in one small window a white handkerchief began to gleam. . . Kapitólina Márkovna was waving it. . . It was

over; she had seen Litvínoff, and he had recognised her. The train came to a standstill, Litvínoff rushed to the door and opened it: Tatyána was standing by the side of her aunt, and smiling brightly, offered him her hand.

He helped them both to alight, uttered a few courteous words, incomplete and obscure, and immediately began to bustle about, began to collect their tickets, their travelling-bags, their plaids, ran off to hunt up a porter, called a carriage; other people were bustling about around him, and he rejoiced at their presence, their noise and their shouts. Tatyána stepped a little to one side, and without ceasing to smile, calmly awaited the conclusion of his hasty preparations. Kapitólina Márkovna, on the contrary, could not stand still; she would not believe that she had at last got to Baden. She suddenly cried out: "And the umbrellas? Tánya, where are the umbrellas?" not noticing that she was holding them firmly under her arm; then she began to bid a loud and prolonged farewell to another lady, whose acquaintance she had made during the journey from Heidelberg to Baden. The lady was none other than Madame Sukhántchikoff, already known to us. She had betaken herself to Heidelberg to worship Gubaryóff, and had returned with "instructions." Kapitólina Márkovna wore a decidedly queer striped mantle, and a round travelling-hat, in the shape of a mushroom, from be-

neath which her closely-clipped white hair stuck out in disarray; short of stature and gaunt, she had got very red with the journey, and was talking in Russian, with a shrill and chanting voice. . . People noticed her immediately.

At last Litvínoff seated her and Tatyána in a carriage, and placed himself opposite them. The horses started off. Inquiries began, hands were shaken afresh, there were mutual smiles, greetings. . . Litvínoff breathed freely: the first moments had passed off successfully. Evidently, nothing about him had struck or disturbed Tánya: she looked at him as clearly and confidingly, she blushed as prettily, she laughed as good-naturedly as ever. At last he made up his mind to look at her, not fleetingly and superficially, but directly and intently: up to that time his own eyes had not obeyed him. Involuntary emotion clutched his heart: the tranquil expression of that honest, open countenance found echo within him in bitter reproach. "Here—thou hast come hither, poor girl,"—he thought:—"thou, whom I so waited for and longed for, with whom I wished to pass my life until its end—thou hast come, and thou hast trusted me . . . but I . . . but I . . ." Litvínoff dropped his head; but Kapitólina Márkovna gave him no opportunity for meditation; she showered questions upon him.

"What is that building with the pillars? Where do they gamble? Who is that coming?

Tánya, Tánya, look, what crinolines! And who is that yonder? They must be chiefly French people from Paris here? Only I imagine everything is frightfully dear. Akh, with what a splendid, clever woman I have made acquaintance! You know her, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch; she told me that she had met you at a certain Russian's, also a wonderfully clever person. She promised to call on us. How she does abuse all these aristocrats—it 's simply marvellous! What gentleman is that with the white moustache? The King of Prussia? Tánya, Tánya, look, that is the King of Prussia! No? it isn't the King of Prussia? The Ambassador from Holland? I can't hear, the wheels rumble so. Akh, what magnificent trees!"

"Yes, aunty, magnificent,"—assented Tánya: —"and how green and cheerful everything is here! Is n't it, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch?"

"It is cheerful . . ." he answered her, through his teeth.

The carriage stopped at last in front of the hotel. Litvínoff escorted the two travellers to the rooms reserved for them, promised to look in in the course of an hour, and returned to his own room. The spell, which had subsided for a moment, immediately took possession of him as soon as he entered it. Here in this room Irína had reigned since the preceding day; everything spoke of her, the very air seemed to have pre-

served mysterious traces of her visit. . . Again Litvínoff felt that he was her slave. He pulled forth her handkerchief, which he had hidden in his breast, pressed his lips to it, and burning memories, like delicate poison, diffused themselves through his veins. He understood that there was no turning back now, no choice; the painful emotion aroused in him by Tatyána melted like snow in the fire, and repentance died within him . . . died—so that even the agitation within him was allayed, and the possibility of dissimulation, which presented itself to his mind, did not revolt him. . . Love, Irína's love—that was what had now become his righteousness, his law, his conscience. . . The prudent, sensible Litvínoff did not even reflect how he was to extricate himself from a situation the horror and indecency of which he felt lightly and in an indirect manner, as it were.

An hour had not elapsed when a waiter presented himself to Litvínoff, sent by the newly-arrived ladies: they requested him to be so good as to come to them in their sitting-room. He followed their emissary, and found them already dressed, and with their hats on. Both expressed a desire to set off at once to inspect Baden, seeing that the weather was very fine indeed. Kapitólina Márkovna, in particular, was fairly burning with impatience; she was even somewhat vexed to learn that the hour for the fashionable

gathering in front of the Konversationshaus had not yet arrived. Litvínoff gave her his arm, and the official promenade began. Tatyána walked by the side of her aunt, and gazed about her with calm curiosity; Kapitólina Márkovna continued her interrogatories. The sight of the roulette, of the stately croupiers, whom she would certainly—had she met them in any other place,—have taken for Cabinet Ministers, of their brisk little shovels, of the golden and silver heaps on the green cloth, of the gambling old women and painted courtesans put Kapitólina Márkovna into a state akin to dumb rapture; she totally forgot that she ought to feel indignant—and only stared, and stared, with all her eyes, quivering, from time to time, with every fresh exclamation. . . The buzzing of the ivory ball in the depths of the roulette penetrated to the very marrow of her bones—and only when she found herself in the open air did she gain sufficient command over herself to designate the game of chance, with a profound sigh, as an immoral invention of aristocratism. A fixed, malicious smile made its appearance on Litvínoff's lips; he talked abruptly and indolently, as though he were vexed or bored. . . But now he turned to Tatyána, and was seized with secret discomfiture: she was gazing attentively at him with an expression as though she were asking herself what sort of an impression was being aroused within

her? He made haste to nod his head at her; she replied to him in the same way, and again looked at him inquiringly, not without a certain effort, as though he stood a great deal further away from her than he did in reality. Litvínoff led his ladies away from the Konversationshaus, and avoiding "the Russian tree," under which his fellow-countrymen were already encamped, took his way to Lichtenthaler Avenue. No sooner had he entered the avenue than he descried Irína from afar.

She was walking toward him with her husband and Potúgin. Litvínoff turned pale as a sheet, but did not retard his pace, and when he came on a level with her he made her a silent bow. And she bowed to him, pleasantly but coldly, and scrutinising Tatyána with a swift glance, she slipped past. . . Ratmíroff raised his hat very high, Potúgin mumbled something.

"Who is that lady?"—suddenly inquired Tatyána. Up to that moment she had hardly opened her lips.

"That lady?"—repeated Litvínoff.—"That lady? She is a certain Madame Ratmíroff."

"A Russian?"

"Yes."

"Did you make her acquaintance here?"

"No; I have known her this long time."

"How beautiful she is!"

"Did you notice her toilette?"—put in Kapi-

tólina Márkovna.—"Ten families might be fed for a whole year for the money which her laces alone are worth. Was that her husband walking with her?"—she inquired of Litvínoff.

"Yes."

"He must be frightfully rich."

"Really, I do not know; I do not think so."

"And what is his rank?"

"That of general."

"What eyes she has!"—remarked Tatyána:—"and the expression of them is so strange: both thoughtful and penetrating. . . I have never seen such eyes."

Litvínoff made no reply; it seemed to him that he again felt on his face Tatyána's questioning glance, but he was mistaken: she was looking under her feet at the sand of the path.

"Good heavens! Who is that monster?"—suddenly exclaimed Kapitólina Márkovna, pointing with her finger at a low *char-à-bancs,* in which, boldly lolling, lay a ruddy-haired, snub-nosed woman, in an unusually rich costume and lilac stockings.

"That monster! Goodness, that is the famous Mademoiselle Cora."

"Who?"

"Mademoiselle Cora . . . a Parisian . . . . celebrity."

"What? that pug-dog? Why, she is extremely ugly!"

"Evidently, that is no hindrance." Kapitólina Márkovna simply flung out her hands with amazement.

"Well, your Baden!"—she ejaculated at last.—"But may we sit down on this bench? I feel rather fatigued."

"Of course you may, Kapitólina Márkovna... That 's what the benches are placed here for."

"Well, the Lord only knows! They say that off there, in Paris, benches stand on the boulevards, also, but it is not proper to sit on them."

Litvínoff made no reply to Kapitólina Márkovna. Only at that very moment did he reflect that a couple of paces distant was the very spot where he had had with Irína the explanation which had settled everything. Then he recollected that to-day he had noticed on her cheek a tiny red spot. . .

Kapitólina Márkovna sank down on the bench, Tatyána seated herself beside her, Litvínoff remained on the path; between him and Tatyána —or did it only seem so to him?—something had taken place . . . something unconscious and gradual.

"Akh, she is queer, she is queer,"—ejaculated Kapitólina Márkovna compassionately, shaking her head.—"Now, if you were to sell *her* toilette, you could feed not ten, but a hundred families. Did you see the diamonds on her red hair under her hat? Diamonds by daylight, hey?"

"Her hair is not red,"—remarked Litvínoff; —"she dyes it to a reddish hue; that 's the fashion now."

Again Kapitólina Márkovna threw her hands apart in amazement, and even fell into meditation.

"Well,"—she said at last,—"we have n't gone to such scandalous lengths in Dresden yet. Because, after all, it is further from Paris. You think so too, don't you, Grigóry Mikhaílitch?"

"I?"—replied Litvínoff, and said to himself: "What the deuce is she talking about?"—"I? Of course . . . of course. . ."

But here hurried footsteps became audible, and Potúgin approached the bench.

"How do you do, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch,"—he said, smiling, and nodding his head.

Litvínoff immediately caught him by the arm.

"Good afternoon, good afternoon, Sozónt Iványitch. I think I met you just now, with . . . just now, in the avenue."

"Yes, it was I."

Potúgin bowed respectfully to the ladies as they sat.

"Permit me to introduce you, Sozónt Iványitch. My good friends, and relatives, have only just arrived in Baden. Potúgin, Sozónt Iványitch, a fellow-countryman, also a visitor to Baden."

Both ladies rose slightly. Potúgin repeated his salutes.

"It is a regular rout here," began Kapitólina Márkovna, in a thin little voice; the kindly old maid was easily abashed, but she tried her best to keep up her dignity:—"every one regards it as a pleasant duty to come here."

"Baden really is a very agreeable place,"—replied Potúgin, casting a sidelong glance at Tatyána;—"a very agreeable place is Baden."

"Yes; only too aristocratic, so far as I can judge. She and I have been living in Dresden this long time . . . it is a very interesting town; but it is, most decidedly, a rout here."

"She has taken a fancy to that word," thought Potúgin.—"Your observation is perfectly just,"—he said aloud:—"On the other hand, nature is wonderful here, and the situation is such as is rarely to be found. Your companion must particularly appreciate it. Do you not, madame?"—he added, this time addressing himself directly to Tatyána.

Tatyána raised her large, clear eyes to Potúgin. She seemed rather perplexed as to what was wanted of her, and why Litvínoff had introduced her, on that first day of her arrival, to that strange man, who had, however, a clever and amiable face, and who looked at her in a courteous and friendly manner.

"Yes,"—she said, at last,—"it is very pretty here."

"You ought to visit the old château,"—went on Potúgin;—"in particular, I recommend you to go to Iburg."

"The Saxon Switzerland,"—began Kapitólina Márkovna.

A blast of notes from trumpets rolled down the avenue: it was the Prussian military band from Rastadt (in 1862 Rastadt was still a federate fortress) beginning its weekly concert in the pavilion. Kapitólina Márkovna instantly rose.

"Music!"—she said:—"the music at the *à la Conversation!* . . . we must go there. It must be three o'clock now, is it not? Society is beginning to assemble now?"

"Yes,"—replied Potúgin;—"this is the most fashionable hour for society, and the music is very fine."

"Well, then we must not delay. Tánya, let us go."

"Will you permit me to accompany you?"—inquired Potúgin, to the no small astonishment of Litvínoff: it could not enter his head that Irína had sent Potúgin.

Kapitólina Márkovna grinned.

"With the greatest pleasure, monsieur . . . monsieur. . ."

"Potúgin,"—prompted he, and offered her his arm.

Litvínoff gave his to Tatyána, and both couples directed their steps toward the Konversationshaus.

Potúgin continued to argue with Kapitólina Márkovna. But Litvínoff walked along without uttering a word, and merely laughed a couple of times, without any cause whatever, and lightly pressed Tatyána's arm. There was falsehood in those pressures, to which she did not respond, and Litvínoff was conscious of the falsehood. They did not express mutual confidence in the close union of two souls which had given themselves to each other, as before; they were now taking the place—for the time being—of the words which he could not invent. That speechless something, which had begun between the two, grew and strengthened. Again Tatyána gazed attentively, almost intently, at him.

The same state of affairs continued in front of the Konversationshaus, at the little table, around which all four seated themselves, with this sole difference that Litvínoff's silence appeared more comprehensible under the bustling turmoil of the crowd, and the thunder and crash of the band. Kapitólina Márkovna was quite beside herself, as the saying is; Potúgin was hardly able to humour her, and satisfy her curiosity. Luckily for him, the gaunt figure of Madame Sukhántchikoff and her ever-restless eyes suddenly made their appearance in the throng. Kapitólina Már-

kovna instantly recognised her, called her up to the table, made her sit down—and a hurricane of words ensued.

Potúgin turned to Tatyána and began to converse with her in a soft and quiet voice, with a caressing expression on his slightly inclined countenance; and she, to her own surprise, answered him lightly and without constraint; she found it agreeable to chat with this stranger, whom she did not know, while Litvínoff continued, as before, to sit motionless, with the same fixed and malicious smile on his lips.

The hour for dinner arrived at last. The band ceased to play, the crowd began to thin out. Kapitólina Márkovna bade a sympathetic farewell to Madame Sukhántchikoff. She had conceived an immense respect for her, although she told her niece afterward that she was an extremely spiteful person; but, on the other hand, she knew everything about everybody! And sewing-machines ought, really, to be introduced as soon as the wedding was celebrated. Potúgin bowed himself off: Litvínoff took his ladies home. As they entered the hotel, a note was handed to him: he stepped aside, and hastily tore off the envelope. On a small scrap of vellum paper stood the following words, scribbled in pencil: "Come to me this evening, for a moment, at seven o'clock, I beg of you. Irína." Litvínoff thrust the paper into his pocket, and as he turned round he smiled

again . . . . at whom? why? Tatyána was standing with her back to him.

The dinner took place at the general table. Litvínoff sat between Kapitólina Márkovna and Tatyána, and having grown rather strangely vivacious, chatted, narrated anecdotes, poured out wine for himself and for the ladies. He bore himself with so much freedom of manner that a French infantry officer from Strassburg, with a goatee and moustache *à la* Napoleon III, who sat opposite, found it possible to join in the conversation, and even wound up with a toast *à la santé des belles moscovites!* After dinner Litvínoff escorted the two ladies to their room, and after standing for a short time by the window, with frowning brows, he suddenly announced that he must absent himself for a little while on business, but would return, without fail, later in the evening. Tatyána said nothing, turned pale, and dropped her eyes. Kapitólina Márkovna had a habit of taking a nap after dinner; Tatyána knew that Litvínoff was aware of this habit of her aunt's: she had expected that he would take advantage of it, that he would remain, as he had not yet been alone with her, had not talked frankly with her, since their arrival. And here he was going off! How was she to understand that? And, altogether, his whole conduct in the course of the day . . . .

Litvínoff made haste to depart, without await-

ing any objections; Kapitólina Márkovna lay down on the divan and, after sighing and drawing a couple of deep breaths, fell into an untroubled sleep; but Tatyána went away to a corner and seated herself in an arm-chair, with her arms tightly folded on her breast.

XIX

Litvínoff briskly ascended the stairs of the Hotel de l'Europe. . . A young girl of thirteen, with a cunning little Kalmýk face, who, evidently, was lying in wait for him, stopped him, saying to him in Russian, "This way, please; Irína Pávlovna will be here directly." He glanced at her with surprise. She smiled, repeated, "If you please, if you please," and led him into a small room which was opposite Irína's bedroom, and filled with travelling coffers and trunks, then immediately vanished, closing the door softly behind her. Litvínoff had not succeeded in taking a survey when the same door swiftly opened and Irína made her appearance, in a pink ball-gown, with pearls in her hair and on her neck. She fairly flung herself at him, seized him by both hands, and remained speechless for several moments; her eyes beamed and her bosom heaved, as though she had been running up a hill.

"I could not receive . . . . you there,"—she began, in a hurried whisper;—"we are going immediately to a formal dinner, but I felt that it was imperatively necessary that I should see you. . . . That was your betrothed, of course, with whom I met you to-day?"

"Yes, that *was* my betrothed,"—said Litvínoff, laying special emphasis on the word "was."

"Exactly, and so I wished to see you for a moment, in order to tell you that you must consider yourself entirely free, that all that which took place yesterday ought not, in the least, to alter your decision. . . ."

"Irína!"—exclaimed Litvínoff:—"why dost thou say this?"

He spoke the words in a loud voice. . . . Boundless passion rang out in them. For a moment Irína involuntarily closed her eyes.

"Oh, my dear one!"—she went on, in a still softer whisper, but with uncontrollable impulsiveness:—"thou dost not know how I love thee, but yesterday I only paid my debt, I expiated a fault of the past. . . Akh! I could not give thee my youth, as I would have liked to do, but I imposed no obligations upon thee, I did not release thee from any promise, my darling! Do as thou wilt: thou art free as air; thou art in no wise bound; understand that! Understand it!"

"But I cannot live without thee, Irína,"—Litvínoff interrupted her, now in a whisper.—"I am thine forever and forever, since yesterday. . . . . Only at thy feet can I breathe. . . ."

He tremblingly pressed himself against her arms. Irína gazed at his bowed head.

"Well, then, thou must know,"—she said,—"that I am ready for anything, that I will regret

nobody and nothing. As thou dost decide, so shall it be. I also am thine forever . . . . . thine."

Some one knocked cautiously at the door. Irína bent over, whispered once more, "Thine. . . . . Farewell!" Litvínoff felt her breath on his hair, and the touch of her lips. When he straightened himself up she was no longer in the room, only her gown was to be heard rustling in the corridor, and Ratmíroff's voice was audible in the distance, "*Eh bien? Vous ne venez pas?*"

Litvínoff sat down on a tall trunk and covered his face. A feminine odour, delicate and fresh, was wafted over him. Irína had held his hands in her hands. "This is too much . . . . too much," he said to himself. The young girl entered the room, and smiling again in response to his troubled glance, she said:

"Please go, sir, while . . . . ."

He rose and left the hotel. An immediate return home was not to be thought of: he must recover his senses. His heart was beating slowly and unevenly; the earth seemed to be moving faintly under his feet. Litvínoff again directed his steps to Lichtenthal Avenue. He comprehended that the decisive moment had arrived, that it had become impossible to delay any longer, to dissimulate, to turn aside, that an explanation with Tatyána was inevitable; he pictured to him-

self how she was sitting there without moving and waiting for him . . . he foresaw what he would say to her; but how was he to set about it, how was he to begin? He had renounced all his regular, well-arranged, orderly future: he knew that he meant to fling himself headlong into the whirlpool, into which it was not proper to glance; . . . but this did not disturb him. That affair was ended, and how was he to present himself before his judge? And even if his judge were to meet him, as it were an angel with a flaming sword: it would be easier for his guilty heart. . . . but otherwise, he himself would be obliged to drive the dagger home. . . . Horrible! But turn back, renounce that other, take advantage of the liberty which was promised him, which was recognised as his right . . . No! It would be better to die! No, he would none of that shameful liberty; . . . but he would abase himself in the dust, and in order that those eyes might incline with love . . . .

"Grigóry Mikhaílitch!"—said a mournful voice, and a hand was laid heavily on Litvínoff.

He glanced round, not without alarm, and beheld Potúgin.

"Excuse me, Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—began the latter, with his customary grimace;—"perhaps I startled you, but, catching a glimpse of you from afar, I thought . . . However, if you do not feel like talking to me . . . ."

" On the contrary, I am very glad,"—muttered Litvínoff through his teeth.

Potúgin walked along by his side.

" It is a beautiful evening,"—he began:—" so warm! Have you been walking long? "

" No, not long."

" But why do I ask? I saw you come out of the Hotel de l'Europe."

" So you have been following me? "

" Yes."

" Have you anything to say to me? "

" Yes, "—repeated Potúgin in a barely audible voice.

Litvínoff halted and gazed at his unbidden companion. His face was pale, his eyes were roving; ancient, long-past grief seemed to start forth upon his distorted features.

" What, precisely, is it that you wish to say to me? "—said Litvínoff slowly, and again moved onward.

" Permit me . . . I will tell you at once. If it is all the same to you,—let us sit down on this bench here. It will be more convenient."

" But it is something private,"—said Litvínoff, as he sat down beside him. " You do not seem like yourself, Sozónt Iványitch."

" Yes, I 'm all right; and there is nothing private about it. In fact, I wished to inform you . . . of the impression which your betrothed has produced on me . . . for she is your betrothed bride,

I believe? . . . Well, in a word, that young girl to whom you introduced me to-day: I must say that never, in the whole course of my life, have I met so sympathetic a person. She—has a heart of gold, a truly angelic soul."

Potúgin uttered all these words with the same bitter and afflicted aspect, so that even Litvínoff could not fail to observe the contradiction between the expression of his face and his remarks.

"You have judged Tatyána Petróvna with entire justice,"—began Litvínoff;—"although I am bound to feel astonished, in the first place, that you are acquainted with my relations to her, and, in the second place, that you have so speedily divined her. She really has an angelic soul; but allow me to inquire if that is what you wished to talk to me about?"

"She cannot be divined at once,"—responded Potúgin, as though avoiding the last question:—"one must look into her eyes. She deserves every possible happiness on earth, and enviable is the lot of that man whose fate it shall be to procure her that happiness! We must wish that he will prove worthy of such a fate."

Litvínoff frowned slightly.

"Excuse me, Sozónt Iványitch,"—he said:—"I must confess that I find your conversation decidedly original. . . . I should like to know: does the hint which your words contain refer to me?"

Potúgin did not immediately reply to Litvínoff; evidently, he was struggling with himself.

"Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—he began at last,—"either I am entirely mistaken in you, or you are in a condition to hear the truth, from whomsoever it may come, and under whatsoever unsightly cover it may present itself. I just told you that I had seen whence you came."

"Well, yes—from the Hotel de l'Europe. And what of that?"

"Of course I know whom you saw there!"

"What?"

"You saw Madame Ratmíroff."

"Well, yes; I was with her. What more?"

"What more? . . . You are the affianced husband of Tatyána Petróvna; you have had a meeting with Madame Ratmíroff, whom you love . . . . and who loves you."

Litvínoff instantly rose from the bench; the blood flew to his head.

"What 's that?"—he said at last, in a wrathful, choking voice:—"is this an insipid jest, or spying? Be so good as to explain yourself."

Potúgin cast a dejected glance at him.

"Akh! Do not take offence at my words, Grigóry Mikhaílitch; you cannot insult me. It was not for that that I began this conversation with you, and I am in no mood for jesting now."

"Possibly, possibly. I am ready to believe in the purity of your intentions; but, nevertheless,

I shall permit myself to ask you, by what right do you meddle with my private affairs, with the heart-life of a stranger, and on what grounds do you set forth your . . . . fiction, with so much self-confidence, for the truth?"

"My fiction! If I had invented that you would not have got angry! and as for my right, I have never yet heard of a man putting to himself the question: whether he had the right to stretch forth a hand to a drowning person."

"I thank you humbly for your solicitude," retorted Litvínoff angrily,—"only I do not stand in the slightest need of it, and all these phrases about perdition prepared by fashionable ladies for inexperienced youths, about the immorality of the highest society and so forth, I regard as merely phrases, and even, in a certain sense, I despise them; and therefore, I must request you not to inconvenience your saving right hand, and allow me to drown in all quietness."

Again Potúgin raised his eyes to Litvínoff. He was breathing heavily, his lips were twitching.

"Well, look at me, young man,"—he burst out at last, and he smote himself on the breast:—"do I look like an ordinary, self-complacent moralist, a preacher? Cannot you understand that, out of mere sympathy for you, no matter how strong that might be, I would never have uttered a word, would not have given you the right to reproach me for that which I hate more than anything else

—for indiscretion, for intrusiveness? Do not you see that the matter here is of a totally different nature—that before you is a man who has been crushed, ruined, definitively annihilated by the very same feeling, from the consequences of which he would like to save you, and . . . . for the very same woman!"

Litvínoff retreated a pace.

"Is it possible! what have you said. . . . You . . . you . . . Sozónt Ivánitch? But Madame Byélsky . . . that child . . . ."

"Akh, do not question me . . . trust me! That dark, terrible story I will not tell you. I hardly knew Madame Byélsky; the child is not mine, but I took entire charge of her . . . . because . . . . because *she* wished it, because it was necessary for *her*. Why should I be here, in your repulsive Baden? And, in conclusion, do you suppose, could you, for one moment, have imagined that I had made up my mind to warn you out of sympathy? I am sorry for that kind, good young girl, your betrothed; but, however, what business have I with your future, with both of you? . . . But I fear for her . . . for her."

"You do me much honour, Mr. Potúgin,"—began Litvínoff,—"but since, according to your words, we are both in the same situation, why do not you read the same sort of exhortations to yourself. And ought not I to attribute your fears to another sentiment?"

"That is, to jealousy, you mean to say? Ekh, young man, young man, you ought to be ashamed to shuffle and shift; you ought to be ashamed not to understand what bitter woe now speaks through my mouth! No, you and I are not in the same situation! I, I—am an old, ridiculous, utterly harmless eccentric fellow . . . but you! But what is the use of talking? Not for one second would you consent to take upon yourself the rôle which I am playing, and playing with gratitude! And jealousy? The man who has not a single drop of hope is not jealous, and this would not be the first time that I have had occasion to experience that emotion. I am only terrified . . . terrified for her, understand that. And could I foresee, when she sent me to you, that the feeling of guilt, which she admitted to be hers, would lead her so far?"

"But permit me, Sozónt Ivánitch, you seem to know . . ."

"I know nothing, and I know everything. I know,"—he added, and turned his head away.—"I know where she was last night. But she is not to be restrained now: like a stone that has been hurled, she must roll to the bottom. I should be a still greater fool if I were to imagine that my words would immediately arrest you . . . you, to whom such a woman . . . . But enough on that score. I could not restrain myself, that is my sole excuse. Yes, and, in conclusion, how was I to

know, and why should I not make the attempt? Perhaps you will think better of it, perhaps some word of mine will fall into your soul. You will not wish to ruin her and yourself, and that innocent, lovely creature. . . Akh, be not angry, do not stamp your foot! Why should I be afraid—why should I stand on ceremony? It is not jealousy which is speaking in me now, nor irritation. . . I am ready to fall at your feet, to entreat you. . . But farewell. Have no fear: all this will remain a secret. I have wished your good."

Potúgin strode along the avenue, and soon disappeared in the already descending gloom. . . . Litvínoff did not detain him.

" A terrible, dark story,"—Potúgin had said to Litvínoff, and had not been willing to narrate it. . . . . And we will touch upon it in a couple of words only.

Eight years previous to this time he had happened to be temporarily ordered by his Ministry to Count Reisenbach. The affair took place in the summer. Potúgin had been in the habit of driving out to his villa with documents, and spent whole days in this manner. Irína was then living with the Count. She never disdained persons of inferior positions, at all events, she never shunned them, and the Countess had repeatedly scolded her for her superfluous Moscow familiarity. Irína speedily divined the clever man in this humble official clothed in uniform, in a coat buttoned to

the throat. She chatted with him frequently and gladly . . . and he . . . he fell in love with her, passionately, profoundly, secretly. . . Secretly! *He* thought so.

The summer passed. The Count ceased to require an outside assistant. Potúgin lost sight of Irína, but could not forget her. Three years later he quite unexpectedly received an invitation from one of his acquaintances, a lady of mediocre standing. This lady was somewhat embarrassed, at first, to express her meaning, but after having extracted from him an oath that he would maintain the greatest secrecy in regard to everything which he should hear, she proposed to him . . . that he should marry a certain young girl who occupied a prominent position in society, and for whom marriage had become indispensable. The lady could hardly make up her mind to hint at the principal in the affair, and then and there offered Potúgin money . . . a great deal of money. Potúgin did not take offence,—amazement overwhelmed his feeling of wrath,—but, as a matter of course, he gave a downright refusal. Then the lady handed him a note addressed to him—from Irína. "You are a noble, kind man," she wrote,—"and I know that you will do anything for me; I ask this sacrifice of you. You will save a being who is dear to me. In saving her, you will save me also. . . Do not ask . . . how. I could not have brought myself

to apply to any one with such a request, but I do stretch out my hands to you, and say: 'Do this for my sake.'" Potúgin reflected, and said that, in fact, he was ready to do a great deal for Irína Pávlovna, but would like to hear her wish from her own lips. The meeting took place that same evening: it did not last long, and no one knew about it, except the lady. Irína was no longer living at Count Reisenbach's.

"Why did you think of me, in particular?"—Potúgin asked her.

She was on the point of enlarging upon his fine qualities, but suddenly paused. . .

"No,"—she said,—"I must tell you the truth. I knew—I know that you love me: this is why I decided upon it. . . ." And thereupon she told him everything.

Eliza Byélsky was an orphan; her relatives did not like her, and were counting upon her inheritance . . . ruin stared her in the face. By saving her, Irína really was rendering a service to the man who was the cause of it all, and who had now come to stand very close to her, Irína. . . Potúgin gazed silently and long at Irína, and consented. She fell to weeping, and all in tears, flung herself on his neck. And he also began to weep . . . but their tears were different. Everything was already prepared for a secret marriage, a powerful hand had swept aside all obstacles. . . But illness ensued . . . and a daughter was born,

and the mother—poisoned herself. What was to be done with the child? Potúgin took it under his charge from the same hands, from the hands of Irína.

A terrible, dark story. . . Let us pass on, reader, let us pass on!

Over an hour more elapsed before Litvínoff made up his mind to return to his hotel. He was already drawing near to it, when he suddenly heard footsteps behind him. Some one appeared to be persistently following him, and walking faster when he accelerated his pace. As he came under a street-lamp, Litvínoff glanced round, and recognised General Ratmíroff. In a white necktie, and an elegant overcoat thrown open on the breast, with a row of tiny stars and crosses on a golden chain, in the buttonhole of his evening coat, the general was returning from the dinner alone. His glance, directly and boldly riveted upon Litvínoff, expressed such scorn and such hatred, his whole figure breathed forth such an importunate challenge, that Litvínoff considered it his duty to advance to meet him, summoning his courage to advance to meet that "row." But, on coming alongside of Litvínoff, the general's face instantly underwent a change: again his wonted playful elegance made its appearance, and his hand, in its pale lilac glove, raised his shining hat on high. Litvínoff silently took off his, and each went his way.

"Assuredly, he has noticed something!"—thought Litvínoff. "If only . . . it were any other person!" thought the general.

Tatyána was playing picquet with her aunt, when Litvínoff entered their room.

"Well, you are a nice one, my dear fellow!"—exclaimed Kapitólina Márkovna, and flung her cards on the table:—"on the very first day you have disappeared, and for the entire evening! Here we have been waiting and waiting for you, scolding and scolding. . ."

"I have not said anything, aunty,"—remarked Tatyána.

"Well, everybody knows what a submissive creature you are! Shame on you, my dear sir! And a betrothed bridegroom, to boot!"

Litvínoff excused himself, after a fashion, and seated himself at the table.

"Why have you stopped playing?"—he asked, after a brief silence.

"That 's just the point! She and I play cards out of ennui when there is nothing to do . . . . but now you have come."

"If you would like to listen to the evening concert,"—said Litvínoff,—"I will take you with great pleasure."

Kapitólina Márkovna looked at her niece.

"Let us go, aunty, I am ready,"—said the latter,—"but would it not be better to remain at home?"

" The very thing! Let us drink tea, in our own Moscow fashion, with a samovár; and let 's have a good talk. We have n't yet had a thoroughly good chat."

Litvínoff ordered tea to be brought, but they did not succeed in having a good talk. He experienced an incessant gnawing of conscience; no matter what he said, it always seemed to him as though he were lying, and that Tatyána divined it. But, in the meanwhile, no change was perceptible in her; she bore herself with as little constraint as ever . . . . only, her glance never once rested on Litvínoff, but slipped over him in a condescending and timid sort of way—and she was paler than usual.

Kapitólina Márkovna asked her whether she had not a headache?

At first Tatyána was on the point of answering " No," but changed her mind, and said: " Yes, a little."

" It is from the journey,"—said Litvínoff, and fairly blushed with shame.

" It is from the journey,"—repeated Tatyána, and again her glance glided over him.

" You must rest, Tánetchka."

" I shall go to bed soon, aunty."

On the table lay the " Guide des Voyageurs "; Litvínoff began to read aloud the description of the environs of Baden.

" All that is so,"—Kapitólina Márkovna inter-

rupted him,—" but one thing we must not forget. They say that linen is very cheap here, so we might buy some for the trousseau."

Tatyána dropped her eyes.

" There is plenty of time, aunty. You never think of yourself. But you certainly must have a new gown made. You see how finely dressed every one is here."

" Eh, my darling! Why should I? What sort of a fashionable figure-plate should I make? It would be all right if I were as beautiful as that acquaintance of yours, Grigóry Mikhaílitch—what in the world is her name? "

" What acquaintance? "

" Why, the one we met to-day."

" Ah, that one! "—said Litvínoff, with simulated indifference, and again he felt odious and ashamed. " No! " he said to himself, " things cannot go on in this way! "

He was sitting by the side of his betrothed, and a few inches away from her, in his pocket, was Irína's handkerchief.

Kapitólina Márkovna went into the next room for a moment.

" Tánya . . . ."—said Litvínoff, with an effort. He called her by that name for the first time that day.

She turned toward him.

" I . . . . have something important to say to you."

"Ah! Really? When? Immediately?"

"No, to-morrow."

"Ah! To-morrow. Well, very good."

Boundless pity immediately filled Litvínoff's soul. He took Tatyána's hand and kissed it submissively, like a guilty man; her heart contracted silently, and that kiss did not make her rejoice.

That night, at two o'clock, Kapitólina Márkovna, who slept in the same room with her niece, suddenly raised her head and listened.

"Tánya!"—she said:—"are you crying?"

Tatyána did not immediately reply.

"No, aunty,"—her gentle little voice made itself heard;—"I have a cold in the head."

XX

"WHY did I say that?" thought Litvínoff, on the following morning, as he sat in front of the window in his own room. He shrugged his shoulders with vexation: he had said it to Tatyána precisely for the purpose of cutting off all retreat from himself. On the window-sill lay a note from Irína: she summoned him to her at eleven o'clock. Potúgin's words incessantly recurred to his memory; then they rushed past with an ominous, though feeble, rather subterranean roar; he waxed angry, and could not, in any way, rid himself of them. Some one knocked at the door.

"*Wer da?*"—inquired Litvínoff.

"Ah! You are at home! Open!"—rang out Bindásoff's hoarse bass voice.

The handle of the door rattled.

Litvínoff turned pale with wrath.

"I am not at home,"—he said sharply.

"Why are n't you at home? What sort of a jest is this?"

"I tell you—I am not at home; take yourself off."

"That 's amiable of you! And I came to borrow money,"—growled Bindásoff.

But he withdrew, clacking his heels, as usual.

Litvínoff almost rushed out after him, so great was his desire to break the neck of that disgusting, insolent fellow. The events of the last few days had deranged his nerves: a little more, and he would have wept. He drank a glass of cold water, locked all the drawers in the furniture, without knowing why he did so, and went to Tatyána.

He found her alone—Kapitólina Márkovna had betaken herself to the shops to make purchases. Tatyána was sitting on the divan, and holding a book with both hands; she was not reading it, and even hardly knew what book it was. She did not stir, but her heart was beating violently in her breast, and the white collar round her neck quivered perceptibly and regularly.

Litvínoff was disconcerted . . . but he sat down beside her, bade her good morning, and smiled; and she smiled silently at him. She had bowed to him when he entered, bowed politely, not in a friendly manner—and had not looked at him. He offered her his hand; she gave him her cold fingers, immediately disentangled them, and returned to her book. Litvínoff felt that to begin the conversation with trivial subjects would be equivalent to offering Tatyána an affront; according to her wont, she demanded nothing, but everything in her said: " I am waiting, I am waiting. . ." He must fulfil his promise. But, al-

though he had thought of nothing else almost all night, he had not prepared even the first introductory words, and positively did not know how to break that cruel silence.

"Tánya,"—he began at last,—"I told you yesterday that I have something important to communicate to you" (in Dresden, when he was alone with her, he had begun to address her as "thou," but now such a thing was not to be thought of). "I am ready, only, I beg you in advance, not to blame me, and to feel assured that my feelings for you . . . ."

He halted. He had lost his breath. Still Tatyána never moved, nor did she glance at him: she merely grasped her book more firmly than before.

"Between us,"—went on Litvínoff, without completing the speech he had begun,—"between us there has always been perfect frankness; I respect you too much to resort to double dealing with you; I want to prove to you that I prize the loftiness and freedom of your soul, and although I . . although, of course . . . ."

"Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—began Tatyána in an even voice, and her whole face became overspread with a death-like pallor,—"I will come to your assistance: you have ceased to love me, and you do not know how to tell me that."

Litvínoff involuntarily shuddered.

"Why?"—he said, almost inaudibly,—"why

should you think that? . . . I really do not understand. . ."

"Well, is it not the truth? Is it not the truth? tell me! tell me!"

Tatyána turned her whole body toward Litvínoff; her face, with its hair thrown back, approached his face, and her eyes, which had not looked at him for so long, fairly devoured his eyes.

"Is it not true?"—she repeated.

He said nothing, did not utter a single sound. He could not have lied at that moment, even if he had known that she would believe him, and that his lie would save her; he was not even capable of enduring her gaze. Litvínoff said nothing, but she no longer needed an answer; she read the answer in his silence, in those guilty, downcast eyes, —and threw herself back, and dropped her book. . . . She had still doubted, up to that moment, and Litvínoff understood this; he understood that she still doubted—and how repulsive, actually repulsive, was everything that he had done!

He threw himself on his knees before her.

"Tánya!"—he exclaimed:—"if I had known how painful it would be to me to behold you in this situation, how frightful it would be to me to think that it is I . . . . I! My heart is lacerated; I do not know myself; I have lost myself and thee, and everything. . . . Everything is ruined, Tánya, everything! Could I have foreseen that I

. . I would deal such a blow to thee, my best friend, my guardian angel! . . . Could I have foreseen that thou and I would meet, would pass such a day as yesterday! . . ."

Tatyána tried to rise and withdraw. He detained her by the hem of her gown.

"No; listen to me for another minute. Thou seest, I am kneeling before thee. But I have not come to ask forgiveness,—thou canst not and must not forgive me; I have come to tell thee that thy friend has gone to destruction, that he is falling into the abyss, and does not wish to drag thee down with him. . . . But save me . . . no! even thou canst not save me. I myself would have repulsed thee. . . . I have perished, Tánya, I have perished irrevocably!"

Tatyána looked at Litvínoff.

"You have perished!"—she said, as though she did not fully understand him.—"You have perished?"

"Yes, Tánya, I have perished. All that is past, all that is dear, all that has heretofore constituted my life,—has perished for me; everything is ruined, everything is torn away, and I know not what awaits me in the future. Thou didst tell me immediately that I had ceased to love thee. . . No, Tánya, I have not ceased to love thee, but another, a terrible, irresistible feeling has descended upon me, has flooded me. I resisted it as long as I was able. . . ."

Tatyána rose; her brows were contracted, her pale face had darkened. Litvínoff also rose.

"You have fallen in love with another woman,"—she began,—"and I divine who she is. . . We met her yesterday, did we not? Very well! I know now what remains for me to do. As you yourself say that this feeling is unalterable in you . . ." (Tatyána paused for an instant: perhaps she still hoped that Litvínoff would not let this last word pass without a reply, but he said nothing) "all there is left for me to do is to give you back . . . your word." Litvínoff bent his head, as though submissively accepting a merited blow.

"You have a right to be angry with me,"—he said,—"you have a perfect right to reproach me with pusillanimity . . . with deceit."

Again Tatyána looked at him.

"I have not reproached you, Litvínoff; I do not accuse you. I agree with you: the very bitterest truth is better than what went on yesterday. What a life ours would have been under present circumstances!"

"What a life mine will be under present circumstances!" echoed painfully in Litvínoff's soul.

Tatyána approached the door of the bedroom.

"I beg that you will leave me alone for a time, Grigóry Mikhaílitch,—we shall meet again, we shall talk together again. All this has been

so unexpected. I must collect my forces . . . . leave me . . . spare my pride. We shall see each other again."

And having said these words, Tatyána hastily left the room and locked the door after her.

Litvínoff went out into the street as though confused, stunned; something dark and heavy had taken root in the very depths of his heart; a man who has cut another man's throat must experience a similar sensation, and, at the same time, he felt relieved, as though he had at last cast off a hateful burden. Tatyána's magnanimity annihilated him; he was vividly conscious of all that he had lost . . . and what then? Vexation was mingled with his repentance; he longed for Irína, as the sole refuge left him,—and was angry with her. For some time past, and with every succeeding day, Litvínoff's feelings had been becoming more and more powerful and complex; this complication tortured, irritated him; he felt lost in this chaos. He thirsted for one thing: to come out, at last, on a road, on any road whatever, if only he might no longer whirl around in this unintelligible twilight. Positive people, like Litvínoff, ought not to get carried away by passion; it destroys the very meaning of their lives. . . But nature asks no questions about logic, our human logic; she has her own, which we do not understand and do not recognise until it rolls over us, like a wheel.

After parting from Tatyána, Litvínoff held one thought firmly in his mind: to see Irína; and he set out for her abode. But the general was at home,—at least, so the porter told him,—and he did not care to enter; he did not feel himself in a condition to dissimulate, and strolled off to the Konversationshaus. Litvínoff's incapacity for dissimulation was experienced that day by Voroshíloff and Pishtchálkin, who chanced to encounter him: he fairly told one of them point-blank that he was as empty as a tambourine; the other, that he was tiresome enough to make a man swoon; it was a good thing that Bindásoff did not turn up: a "grosser Scandal" certainly would have ensued. Both young men were amazed; Voroshíloff even asked himself whether his honour as an officer did not demand reparation?—but, like Gógol's lieutenant Pirogóff, he soothed himself in the café with bread and butter. Litvínoff caught a distant glimpse of Kapitólina Márkovna, busily running from shop to shop in her motley mantle. . . He felt ashamed before the kind, ridiculous, noble old woman. Then he recalled Potúgin and their conversation of the preceding day. . . . But now some influence was breathing upon him, something impalpable and indubitable; had the exhalation emanated from a falling shadow, it could not have been more intangible. But he immediately felt that Irína was approaching. And in fact, she appeared at

a distance of a few paces, arm in arm with another lady; their eyes instantly met. Irína, in all probability, noticed something unusual in the expression of Litvínoff's face; she halted in front of a shop, in which a mass of tiny wooden clocks of Schwarzwald manufacture were on sale, summoned him to her by a movement of her head, and pointing out one of these clocks to him, and requesting him to admire the pretty dial-plate, with a painted cuckoo at the top, she said, not in a whisper, but in her ordinary voice, as though completing a phrase which had been begun—which attracts less attention from strangers:

"Come an hour hence, I shall be at home and alone."

But at this point, that squire of dames, Monsieur Verdier, fluttered up to her, and began to go into ecstasies over the *feuille morte* tint of her gown, over her low-crowned Spanish hat, which was pulled down to her very eyebrows. . . Litvínoff vanished in the crowd.

XXI

"Grigóry,"—said Irína to him, two hours later, as she sat beside him on the couch and laid both her hands on his shoulders.—"What is the matter with thee? Tell me now, quickly, while we are alone."

"With me?"—said Litvínoff.—"I am happy, happy, that is what is the matter with me."

Irína dropped her eyes, smiled, sighed.

"That is not an answer to my question, my dear one."

Litvínoff reflected.

"Well, then, thou must know . . . since thou imperatively demandest it" (Irína opened her eyes very widely, and drew back a little): "I have to-day told my betrothed everything."

"What dost thou mean by everything? Didst thou mention my name?"

"Irína, for God's sake, how could such a thought enter thy head! that I . . . ."

Litvínoff actually clasped his hands.

"Well, forgive me . . . . forgive me. What didst thou say?"

"I told her that I no longer loved her."

"Did she ask why?"

"I did not conceal from her the fact that I loved another, and that we must part."

"Well . . . and how about her? Did she consent?"

"Akh, Irína, what a girl she is! She is all self-sacrifice, all nobility!"

"I believe it, I believe it . . however, there was nothing else left for her to do."

"And not a single reproach, not a single bitter word to me, to the man who has spoiled her whole life, who has deceived her, pitilessly abandoned her. . ."

Irína inspected her finger-nails.

"Tell me, Grigóry, did she love thee?"

"Yes, Irína, she did love me."

Irína said nothing, but smoothed her gown.

"I must confess,"—she began,—"that I do not quite understand why thou hast taken it into thy head to have an explanation with her."

"How is it that thou dost not understand it, Irína! Is it possible that thou wouldst have wished to have me lie, dissimulate before her—before that pure soul? Or didst thou assume . . . ."

"I assumed nothing," interrupted Irína.—"I must admit that I have thought very little about her. . . I cannot think of two persons at the same time."

"That is, thou intendest to say . . ."

"Well, and what then? Is she going away, that pure soul?"—interrupted Irína again.

"I know nothing about that,"—replied Litvínoff.—"I must see her again. But she will not remain."

"Ah! A prosperous journey to her!"

"No, she will not remain. But neither am I thinking of her at present. I am thinking of what *thou* hast said to me, of what *thou* hast promised me."

Irína cast a sidelong glance at him.

"Ungrateful! Art thou still not satisfied?"

"No, Irína, I am not satisfied. Thou hast made me happy, but I am not satisfied, and thou understandest me."

"That is to say, I . . ."

"Yes, thou understandest my meaning. Recollect thy words, remember what thou hast written to me. I cannot share with another; I cannot consent to the pitiful rôle of a secret lover; I have cast not my own life only, but another life also, at thy feet. I have renounced everything I have, I have ground everything to dust, without compassion and without recall; but, on the other hand, I believe, I am firmly convinced, that thou also wilt keep thy promise and wilt unite thy fate forever to mine. . . ."

"Thou desirest that I should flee with thee? I am ready . . ." (Litvínoff kissed her hands with rapture) "I am ready; I do not take back my word. But hast thou considered the difficulties . . . hast thou prepared the means?"

"I? I have not yet had time to consider, or to prepare, but say this one thing, 'yes'; grant me the permission to act, and before a month shall have elapsed . . . ."

"A month! We leave for Italy in a fortnight."

"A fortnight is enough for me. Oh, Irína! thou receivest my proposal coldly, to all appearances; perhaps it seems to thee fanciful, but I am not a boy, I am not accustomed to comfort myself with fancies; I know that it is a terrible step, I know what a responsibility I am assuming, but I see no other issue. Reflect, in short, that I am bound to break off all connection with the past, in order that I may not bear the reputation of a despicable liar in the eyes of that young girl whom I have sacrificed for thy sake."

Irína suddenly drew herself up, and her eyes flashed.

"Well, you must excuse me, Grigóry Mikhaílitch! If I make up my mind to do that, if I flee, I shall flee with the man who does it for me, precisely for me, and not for the sake of not lowering himself in the opinion of a phlegmatic young lady who has milk and water, *du lait coupé,* in her veins, in place of blood. And I will tell you something else, also: I must say that this is the first time it has ever been my lot to hear that the man to whom I have shown favour is deserving of compassion, is playing a sorry part! I know

a more pitiful rôle: the rôle of a man who does not know what is going on in his own soul!"

It was now Litvínoff's turn to draw himself up.

"Irína,"—he began.

But she suddenly pressed both palms to her brow, and flinging herself on his breast, with a convulsive impulse, embraced him with unfeminine force.

"Forgive me, forgive me,"—she said in a trembling voice,—"forgive me, Grigóry! Thou seest how spoiled I am, how hateful, jealous, wicked I am! Thou seest how I need thy help, thy indulgence! Yes, save me, tear me out of this abyss before I perish utterly! Yes, let us flee, let us flee from these people, from this society, into some distant, free, beautiful land! Perhaps thy Irína will become, at last, more worthy of the sacrifices which thou art making for her! Be not angry with me, my dearest,—and understand that I will do everything which thou commandest; I will go anywhere, whithersoever thou leadest me!"

Litvínoff's heart was completely upset. Irína pressed more violently than ever to him with her supple young body. He bent over her dishevelled, perfumed locks, and in an intoxication of gratitude and rapture, hardly ventured to caress them with his hand, hardly touched them with his lips.

"Irína, Irína,"—he kept repeating,—"my angel. . ."

She suddenly raised her head, listened. . . "Those are my husband's footsteps . . he has gone into his own room,"—she whispered, and hastily moving away, she seated herself in an arm-chair. Litvínoff was on the point of rising. . . "Where art thou going?" she continued in the same whisper:—"remain; he suspects thee, as it is. Or art thou afraid of him?"—She never took her eyes from the door.—"Yes, it is he; he will come hither immediately. Tell me something, converse with me."—Litvínoff could not at once recover himself, and remained silent.—"Are not you going to the theatre to-morrow?"—she said aloud.—"They are playing 'Le Verre d'Eau,' a stale old piece, and Plessy is frightfully affected. . . I feel as though I were in a fever,"—she added, lowering her voice,—we cannot go on like this; we must think it over carefully. I must warn thee that he has all my money; *mais j'ai mes bijoux*. Let us go to Spain, shall we?"—Again she raised her voice.—"Why is it that all actresses get fat? There is Madeleine Brohan, for example. . . Do say something; don't sit there dumb like that. My head is whirling. But thou must have no doubts of me. . . I will let thee know where thou must come to-morrow. Only, it was unnecessary for thee to tell that young lady. . . . *Ah! mais c'est charmant!*"—

she suddenly exclaimed, and with a nervous laugh she tore off the border of her handkerchief.

"May I come in?"—inquired Ratmíroff, from the adjoining room.

"Yes . . . . yes."

The door opened, and the general appeared on the threshold. He scowled at the sight of Litvínoff, but saluted him, that is to say, he swayed the upper part of his body.

"I did not know that thou hadst a visitor,"—he said:—"*je vous demande pardon de mon indiscretion.* And does Baden still amuse you, Monsieur . . . . Litvínoff?"

Ratmíroff always pronounced Litvínoff's surname with hestitation, as though he had forgotten it every time, and could not immediately recall it. . . By this means, and by raising his hat in an exaggerated manner, he meant to sting him.

"I do not find myself bored here, Monsieur *le general.*"

"Really? But I have grown horribly tired of Baden. We are going away shortly, are we not, Irína Pávlovna? *Assez de Bade comme ça.* Moreover, luckily for you, I have won five hundred francs to-day."

Irína coquettishly held out her hand.

"Where are they? Please give them to me. For pin-money."

"I have them . . . I have them. . . . But are you going already, M'sieu' . . . Litvínoff?"

"Yes, sir, I am going, as you see."

Again Ratmíroff swayed his body.

"Farewell until another pleasant meeting!"

"Good-bye, Grigóry Mikhaílovitch,"—said Irína.—"And I shall keep my promise."

"What promise? if I may be so curious as to inquire?"—asked her husband.

Irína smiled.

"No—that is . . . a matter between ourselves. *C'est àpropos du voyage . . . où il vous plaira.* Art thou acquainted with Staël's works?"

"Ah! of course, of course I am. Very pretty pictures. . ."

Ratmíroff appeared to be on good terms with his wife: he addressed her as "thou."

XXII

"'Tis better not to think about it," Litvínoff kept repeating to himself, as he strode along the street, and became conscious that the turmoil within him was rising once more. "The matter is settled. She will keep her promise, and all I have to do is to take all the necessary measures. . . But she seems to doubt." . . . He shook his head. His own intentions presented themselves to him in an odd light; there was a touch of strangeness and improbability about them. It is not possible to dwell long upon one and the same set of thoughts; they gradually shift their places, like bits of glass in a kaleidoscope . . . . and the first one knows, the figures before his eyes are totally different. A sensation of profound weariness overpowered Litvínoff. . . He longed to rest for an hour. . . But Tánya? He gave a start, and without reflecting further, submissively wended his way home, and the only thing which occurred to him was that to-day he was being tossed from one woman to another, like a ball. . . It mattered not: he had been compelled to make an end of it. He entered the hotel, and in the same submissive manner, without hesitation or delay, he betook himself to Tatyána.

He was met by Kapitólina Márkovna. With his first glance at her, he recognised the fact that she knew everything: the poor spinster's eyes were swollen with tears, and her reddened face, framed in rumpled white hair, expressed alarm and the pain of indignation, of burning and boundless amazement. She darted toward Litvínoff, but instantly paused, and biting her quivering lips, she gazed at him, as though she wished to entreat him, and slay him, and convince herself that all this was a dream, madness, an impossible affair, was it not?

"Here, you . . you have come, you have come," she began. . . The door leading into the adjoining room instantly flew open—and Tatyána, pale to transparency, entered with a light step.

She softly embraced her aunt with one arm, and made her sit down by her side.

"Do you sit down also Grigóry Mikhaílitch," —she said to Litvínoff, who was standing, as though bewildered, near the door.—"I am very glad to see you again. I have communicated your decision, our mutual decision, to aunty; she shares it entirely, and approves of it. . . Without mutual love there can be no happiness; mutual respect alone is not sufficient" (at the word "respect" Litvínoff involuntarily cast down his eyes), "and it is better to part beforehand, than to repent afterward. Is n't that true, aunty?"

"Yes, of course,"—began Kapitólina Márkovna,—"of course, Tániusha, the man who does not know how to value you . . . who has made up his mind . . ."

"Aunty, aunty,"—Tatyána interrupted her,—"remember what you promised me. You yourself have always said to me: 'the truth, the truth before everything, and—liberty.' Well, and truth is not always sweet, neither is liberty; otherwise, wherein would our merit lie?"

She kissed Kapitólina Márkovna tenderly on her white hair, and turning to Litvínoff she went on:

"My aunt and I have decided to leave Baden. . . I think it will be easier so for all of us."

"When do you think of going?"—said Litvínoff, in a dull voice. He recalled that Irína had said the very same words to him not long before.

Kapitólina Márkovna was on the point of starting forward, but Tatyána restrained her, touching her lightly on the shoulder.

"Probably soon, very soon."

"And will you permit me to inquire whither you intend to go?" asked Litvínoff in the same voice as before.

"First to Dresden, then, probably, to Russia."

"But what do you want to know that for now, Grigóry Mikhaílitch?" . . exclaimed Kapitólina Márkovna.

"Aunty, aunty," interposed Tatyána again. A brief silence ensued.

"Tatyána Petróvna,"—began Litvínoff,—"you understand what a torturingly—painful and sorrowful feeling I must be experiencing at this moment. . . ."

Tatyána rose.

"Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—she said,—"let us not talk about that. . . . Please, I entreat you, for your own sake as well as for mine. I cannot recognise you since yesterday, and I can very well imagine that you must be suffering now. But what is the use of talking, what is the use of irritating . . . ." (She paused: it was evident that she wished to wait until her rising emotion was allayed, to swallow the tears which were already welling up; and in this she succeeded.) "What is the use of irritating the wound which it is impossible to heal? Let us leave that to time. But now I have a request to make of you, Grigóry Mikhaílitch: I will give you a letter presently; be so good as to post that letter yourself, it is of considerable importance, and aunty and I have no time now. . . . I shall be very much obliged to you. Wait a moment. . . I will return immediately. . . ."

On the threshold of the door Tatyána cast an apprehensive glance at Kapitólina Márkovna; but the latter was sitting in so dignified and decorous an attitude, with such a severe expression

on her frowning brow and tightly-compressed lips, that Tatyána only nodded to her, and left the room.

But the door had barely closed behind her, when all expression of dignity and severity instantaneously vanished from the face of Kapitólina Márkovna: she rose, rushed up to Litvínoff on tiptoe, and bending double, and striving to look into his eyes, she began to speak in a hurried, tearful whisper:

"O Lord my God,"—said she,—"Grigóry Mikhaílitch, what is the meaning of this: is it a dream? *You* reject Tánya, you have ceased to love her, you have betrayed your word! You are doing this, Grigóry Mikhaílitch, you, in whom we all had trusted as in a wall of stone! You? You? Thou, Grísha? . . ." Kapitólina Márkovna paused.—"Why, you are killing her, Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—she went on, without awaiting an answer, and her tears fairly streamed, in tiny drops, down her cheeks.—"You need not regard the fact that she is keeping up her courage, for you know what her disposition is! She never complains; she never pities herself, so others must pity her! Here she is now, persuading me: 'Aunty, we must maintain our dignity!' but who cares about dignity, when I foresee death, death. . . ." Tatyána made a noise with a chair in the adjoining room.—"Yes, I foresee death,"—resumed the old woman, in a still softer voice.—

"And what can have happened? Have you been bewitched? It was not so very long ago, was it, that you were writing her the tenderest sort of letters? Yes, and in conclusion, can an honest man behave in this manner? I, as you know, am a woman wholly devoid of prejudices, *esprit fort,* and I have given Tánya the same sort of education—she, also, has a free spirit. . . ."

"Aunty!" rang out Tatyána's voice from the next room.

"But your word of honour,—this is duty, Grigóry Mikhaílitch. Especially for people with your—with our principles! If we do not recognise duty, what is left to us? That must not be violated—in this way, at one's own caprice, without considering what is to be the result on others! This is dishonest . . . yes, it is a crime; what sort of freedom is this?"

"Aunty, come here, please,"—rang out again.

"In a minute, my darling, in a minute. . ." Kapitólina Márkovna seized Litvínoff by the hand.—"I see you are angry, Grigóry Mikhaílitch. . ." ("I? I am angry?" he tried to exclaim, but his tongue was benumbed.) "I do not wish to make you angry—O Lord! am I in any mood for that? On the contrary, I wish to entreat you: change your mind while still there is time; do not destroy her, do not destroy your own happiness; she will trust you again, Grigóry Mikhaílitch, she will trust you again; nothing

is lost yet; for she loves you as no one ever will love you! Abandon this hateful Baden-Baden, let us go away together, only get away from under this spell, and, the chief thing of all, have pity, have pity. . ."

"But aunty,"—said Tatyána, with a trace of impatience in her voice.

But Kapitólina Márkovna did not obey her.

"Only say yes,"—she persisted to Litvínoff, —"and I will arrange all the rest. . . Come, at least nod your head at me! nod your head, just once, like this!" Litvínoff felt as though he would gladly have died at that moment; but he did not utter the word "yes," and he did not nod his head.

Tatyána made her appearance, letter in hand. Kapitólina Márkovna instantly sprang away from Litvínoff, and turning her face aside, bent low over the table, as though she were inspecting the bills and papers which lay upon it.

Tatyána approached Litvínoff.

"Here,"—said she,—"this is the letter of which I spoke to you. . . You will go immediately to the post-office, will you not?"

Litvínoff raised his eyes. . . Before him, in very truth, stood his judge. Tatyána seemed to him taller, more stately; her face, beaming with unprecedented beauty, had become magnificently petrified, as in a statue; her bosom did not rise and fall, and her gown, uniform in hue,

and close-fitting, fell, like a chiton, in the long, straight folds of marble fabrics, to her feet, which it concealed. Tatyána was gazing straight before her, at Litvínoff only, and her glance, also smooth and cold, was the glance of a statue. In it he read his sentence; he bowed, took the letter from the hand which was immovably outstretched toward him and silently departed.

Kapitólina Márkovna flew at Tatyána, but the latter repulsed her embrace, and dropped her eyes; a flush overspread her face, and with the words, " Come, as quickly as possible now! " she returned to the bedroom; Kapitólina Márkovna followed her, with drooping head.

On the letter intrusted to Litvínoff by Tatyána stood the address of one of her friends in Dresden, a German, who let out small, furnished apartments. Litvínoff dropped the letter into the post-box, and it seemed to him that, along with that little scrap of paper, he had laid all his past, his whole life, in the grave. He went out of the town, and roamed, for a long time, along the narrow paths among the vineyards; he could not rid himself of an incessant feeling of scorn for himself, which beset him like the buzzing of an importunate summer fly: he certainly had played a far from enviable part in this last interview. . . . And when he returned to the hotel and, a little while later, inquired about his ladies, he was informed that immediately

after his departure they had ordered themselves to be driven to the railway station, and had set off, with the mail-train, no one knew whither. Their things had been packed and their bills paid since the morning. Tatyána had requested Litvínoff to take the letter to the post-office, evidently with a view to getting him out of the way. He tried to question the door-porter: " Had not the ladies left a note for him? " but the porter replied in the negative, and even manifested surprise; it was plain that this sudden departure from rooms engaged for a week struck him as strange and suspicious. Litvínoff turned his back on him, and locked himself up in his own room.

He did not leave it until the following day; during the greater part of the night he sat at the table, writing and tearing up what he had written. . . Daylight had already begun to dawn when he finished his work,—which was a letter to Irína.

XXIII

This is what the letter to Irína contained:

"My betrothed bride went away yesterday: we shall never see each other again. . . I do not even know with certainty where she will live. She carried away with her everything which hitherto had seemed to be desirable and precious; all my purposes, plans, intentions, vanished along with her; my very labours have disappeared, my prolonged toil has been turned to naught, all my occupations have lost their sense and application; all this is dead; my *ego*, my former *ego*, died and was buried with yesterday. I feel that plainly, I see, I know it. . . And I do not complain, in the least, of that. It is not for the purpose of complaining that I have begun to discuss this with thee. . . Have I any cause to complain, when thou lovest me, Irína? I only want to tell thee, that out of all this dead past, out of all these beginnings and hopes—which have turned to smoke and dust—only one living, invincible thing remains: my love for thee. Save for this love, I have nothing left; it would not be enough to call it my sole treasure; I am all in this love, this love is the whole of me; in it is my future, my vocation, my holy things, my fatherland! Thou knowest me, Irína, thou knowest that set phrases are foreign and abhorrent to me, and however forcible may be the words wherewith I strive to express my feeling, thou wilt not doubt

their sincerity, thou wilt not consider them exaggerated. It is not a boy, who is stammering out ill-considered vows before thee, in a burst of momentary enthusiasm, it is a man, already tried by the years, who simply and straightforwardly, almost with terror, is expressing that which he has recognised to be the indubitable truth. Yes, thy love has taken the place of everything else with me—everything, everything! Judge for thyself: can I leave *all* this in the hands of another man, can I permit him to dispose of thee? Thou, thou wilt belong to him, all my being, my heart's blood, will belong to him,—and I myself . . . Where am I? What am I? I am to stand on one side, as a looker-on . . . . a looker-on at my own life! No, this is impossible, impossible! To share, to share by stealth in that without which it is not worth while, without which it is impossible to *breathe* . . . that is a lie and death. I know how great is the sacrifice I require of thee, without having any right so to do; and what can give one a right to a sacrifice? But I do not take this step from egoism: an egoist would find it easier and more tranquil not to raise this question at all. Yes, my demands are heavy, and I shall not be surprised if they frighten thee.—The people with whom thou must live are hateful to me, society oppresses thee; but hast thou the strength to abandon that same society, to trample under foot the crown wherewith it has crowned thee, to arouse against thee public opinion, the opinion of those hateful people? Ask thyself, Irína; do not take upon thyself a burden greater than thou canst bear. .— I do not mean to reproach thee, but remember: once before thou hast failed to resist the charm. I can give thee so little in exchange for what thou wilt lose!

Hearken to my last word: if thou dost not feel thyself in a condition to leave everything and follow me to-morrow, to-day,—thou seest how boldly I speak, how little I spare myself,—if the uncertainty of the future, and estrangement, and isolation, and public censure alarm thee, if thou canst not trust thyself, in a word—tell me so frankly and without delay, and I will go away; I will go away, with a harrowed soul, but I will thank thee for thy truthfulness. But if thou, my most beautiful, my radiant empress, hast really come to love such a petty, obscure man as I, and art really ready to share his lot,—well, then give me thy hand, and we will set forth together on our different road! Only, thou must know this: my resolution is firm: either all, or nothing! This is madness . . . but I cannot do otherwise, I cannot, Irína! I love thee too mightily.

"Thy G. L."

This letter did not please Litvínoff himself very much. It did not quite faithfully and accurately express what he wished to say; awkward expressions, by turns magniloquent and bookish, occurred in it, and when it was finished it was no better than many of the other letters which he had torn up; but it happened to be the last one, and after all, the chief thing had been said; and weary, exhausted, Litvínoff did not feel himself capable of extracting anything else from his head. Moreover, he did not possess the skill to set forth his whole thought in literary form, and, like all persons who are not accustomed to this, he

worried over the style. His first letter had, probably, been the best: it had poured forth burning hot from his heart. At any rate, Litvínoff despatched his epistle to Irína.

She replied with a brief note:

"Come to me to-day," she wrote to him; "*he* has gone off for the whole day. Thy letter has agitated me extremely. I keep thinking, thinking . . . and my head is dizzy with my thoughts. I am greatly distressed, but thou lovest me, and I am happy.

"Thy I."

She was sitting in her boudoir when Litvínoff presented himself to her. He was ushered in by the same thirteen-year-old girl who had kept watch for him on the staircase the day before. On the table, in front of Irína, stood an open, semicircular pasteboard box filled with laces; she was abstractedly turning them over with one hand; in the other she held Litvínoff's letter. She had only just stopped crying: her eyelashes were wet, and her eyelids were swollen; the traces of tears which had not been wiped away were visible on her cheeks. Litvínoff halted on the threshold: she had not observed his entrance.

"Thou art weeping?" he said in amazement.

She started, passed her hand over her hair, and smiled.

"Why art thou weeping?"—repeated Litvínoff. She silently pointed to the letter.

" So thou art crying over that . . ." he said, haltingly.

" Come here, sit down,"—she said,—" give me thy hand. Well, yes, I have been crying. . . .Why does that surprise thee? Is *this* easy?" Again she pointed at the letter. Litvínoff sat down.

" I know that it is not easy, Irína; I say the same thing to thee in my letter. . . I understand thy position. But if thou believest in the significance of thy love for me, if my words have convinced thee, thou must also understand what I now feel at the sight of thy tears. I have come hither like a condemned man, but I am waiting: what will be announced to me? Death or life? Thy answer will decide everything. Only, do not look at me with such eyes. . . . They remind me of the eyes of days gone by, the Moscow eyes."

Irína suddenly blushed and turned away, as though she herself were conscious of something improper in her gaze.

" Why dost thou say that, Grigóry? Art not thou ashamed of thyself? Thou wishest to know my answer . . . . but canst thou doubt it? Thy letter, my friend, has set me to thinking. Thou writest here that my love has replaced all else for thee, that even thy former occupations must now remain without application; but I ask thee: Can a man live by love alone? Will it not pall on him in the end, will not he long for activity,

and will not he upbraid that which has alienated him from it? That is the thought which terrifies me; that is what I fear, and not that which thou hast proposed."

Litvínoff gazed attentively at Irína, and Irína gazed attentively at him as though each of them was desirous of penetrating further and more profoundly into the soul of the other, further and more profoundly than the spoken word can attain, or reveal.

"There is no necessity for thy fearing that,"—began Litvínoff.—"I must have expressed myself badly.—"Boredom? Inactivity? With the new forces which thy love will give me? Oh, Irína, believe me, thy love is all the world to me, and I myself cannot now foresee all that may develop from it!"

Irína became thoughtful.

"But where are we to go?"—she whispered.

"Where? We will talk about that hereafter. But, of course . . . of course, thou consentest . . . thou consentest, Irína?"

She looked at him.—"And thou wilt be happy?"

"Oh, Irína!"

"Thou wilt regret nothing? Never?"

She bent over the box of laces, and again began to sort them over.

"Be not angry with me, my dearest, if I busy myself with this nonsense at such a moment. . .

I am obliged to go to a ball, given by a certain lady. These rags have been sent to me, and I must make my selection to-day. Akh! I am terribly distressed!"—she suddenly exclaimed, and laid her face against the edge of the box. . . Again tears dropped from her eyes. . . She turned away: the tears might fall on the lace.

"Irína, thou art weeping again,"—began Litvínoff, anxiously.

"Well, yes, I am,"—assented Irína.—"Akh, Grigóry, do not torture me, do not torture thyself! . . . Let us be free people! What is the harm if I do cry? Yes, and do I understand myself why these tears flow? Thou knowest, thou hast heard my decision, thou art convinced that it is unalterable, that I consent to . . . how was it thou didst word it? . . to everything or nothing . . . what more? Let us be free! Why these mutual chains? Thou and I are alone now. Thou lovest me, I love thee; have we nothing better to do than to extort our opinions from each other? Look at me; I have not tried to present myself in a fine light before thee, not by so much as a single word have I hinted at the fact, that it may not be so easy for me to trample under foot my conjugal duties. . . But I do not deceive myself, I know that I am a criminal, and that *he* has a right to kill me. Well, and what of that! Let us be free, I say. The day is ours—eternity is ours."

She rose from her chair, and looked down upon

Litvínoff, smiling faintly, and narrowing her eyelids, and with her arm, bare to the elbow, sweeping back a long lock of hair, upon which sparkled two or three tears. A rich lace shoulder-cape slipped from the table and fell on the floor, at Irína's feet. She trod upon it with scorn.— "Do not I please thee to-day? Have I grown ugly since yesterday? Tell me, hast thou often beheld a more beautiful arm? And my hair? Tell me, dost thou love me?"

She seized him with both arms, pressed his head to her breast; her comb rattled and fell, and her loosened hair flowed over him in a soft, perfumed flood.

XXIV

Litvínoff paced to and fro in his room at the hotel, with thoughtfully drooping head. It now behoved him to pass from theory to practice, to seek the means and the road for a flight, for an emigration to unknown lands. . . But, strange to say, he was not meditating about these means and roads so much as on the point,—had the resolution on which he had so obstinately insisted been actually, indubitably taken? Had the final, irrevocable word been uttered? But, surely, Irína had said to him at parting: "Act, act, and when everything is ready, thou hast only to inform me." It was settled! Away with all doubts. . . He must proceed. And Litvínoff had proceeded—so far—to meditation. First of all, there was the question of money. Litvínoff had on hand one thousand three hundred and thirty-eight gulden—in French money two thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight francs; it was an insignificant sum, but sufficient for their first necessities, and so he must write at once to his father to send him as much as possible: he might sell a forest, a bit of land. . . But under what pretext? . . . Well, a pretext would be found. Irína

had spoken, it is true, of her *bijoux,* but it was not proper to take that into consideration; who knows but they might serve for a rainy day. In addition, among his assets was a fine Geneva half-chronometer watch, for which he might get . . say, four hundred francs. Litvínoff betook himself to his bankers, and turned the conversation, in a roundabout way, on the subject whether it would be possible, in case of need, to borrow money. But the bankers in Baden are an experienced and cautious folk, and in reply to such roundabout hints immediately assume a decrepit, languid mien, precisely like that of a field-flower whose stem has been severed by the scythe; several of them, however, laugh cheerfully and boldly in your face, as though they appreciate your innocent jest. Litvínoff, to his own mortification, even tried his luck at roulette, even—oh, the ignominy!—placed a thaler on thirty numbers, corresponding to the number of his years. He did this with a view to augmenting and rounding out his capital; and, in fact, if he did not augment, he did round out his capital, by losing the extra twenty-eight gulden. The second question was, also, of no little importance: A passport. But a passport is not so obligatory for a woman, and there are countries where it is not required at all. Belgium, for example, or England; and, in conclusion, a passport which was not Russian might be obtained. Litvínoff

reflected very seriously on all these things. His resolution was strong, without the slightest trace of wavering; but in the meantime, contrary to his will, against his will, something the reverse of serious, something almost comic, passed through, leaked through his meditations, as though his enterprise itself were a matter of jest, and no one had ever eloped with any one in reality, but only in comedies and romances, and, possibly, somewhere in the provincial tracts, in some Tchukhlóm or Syzrán district, where, according to the statement of one traveller, people even vomit with tedium at times. At this point it recurred to Litvínoff's memory how one of his friends, cornet Batzóff, on the retired list, had carried off a merchant's daughter in a post-sledge with sleigh-bells, having preliminarily got her parents, and even the bride herself, intoxicated, and how it had afterward turned out that he had been cheated, and almost killed outright, to boot. Litvínoff waxed extremely wroth with himself for such inappropriate recollections, and then, recalling Tatyána, her sudden departure, all that woe and suffering and shame, he became but too profoundly conscious that the deed which he was contemplating was of anything but a facetious nature, and that he had been in the right when he had said to Irína that no other issue was left, for his own honour's sake. . . And again, at this mere name, something burning momentarily

enveloped him with a sweet anguish, then died away around his heart.

The trampling of a horse's hoofs resounded behind him. . . He stepped aside . . Irína had overtaken him on horseback; by her side rode the fat general. She recognised Litvínoff, nodded her head to him, and giving her horse a blow on the withers with her whip, started it into a gallop, then suddenly urged it onward at full speed. Her dark veil floated in the wind. . .

"Pas si vite! Nom de Dieu! pas si vite!"— shouted the general, and galloped after her.

XXV

On the following morning, Litvínoff had just returned home from his bankers, with whom he had had another conference about the playful unsteadiness of our rate of exchange, and the best method of sending money abroad, when the door-porter handed him a letter. He recognised Irína's handwriting, and without breaking the seal—an evil premonition awoke in him, God only knows why—he went off to his own room. This is what he read (the letter was written in French):

"My Dearest! I have been thinking all night about thy proposition. . . I will not deceive thee. Thou hast been frank with me, and I will be frank: I *cannot* elope with thee, I *have not the strength* to do it. I feel how culpable I am toward thee; my second fault is greater than the first—I despise myself, my cowardice; I overwhelm myself with reproaches, but I cannot change myself. In vain do I demonstrate to myself that I have ruined thy happiness, that thou now hast a right to regard me merely as a frivolous coquette, that I offered myself, that I myself gave thee a solemn promise. . . I am horrified; I feel hatred toward myself, but I cannot act otherwise—I cannot, I cannot. I do not seek to justify myself; I will not tell thee that I myself

was carried away . . . . all that signifies nothing; but I do wish to tell thee, and to repeat it, and repeat it yet again: I am thine, thine forever, do with me as thou wilt, when thou wilt: without resistance or calculation, I am thine. . . But flee, abandon everything. . . no! no! no! I entreated thee to save me. I myself hoped to obliterate everything, to consume everything, as in the fire . . . but evidently, there is no salvation for me; evidently, the poison has penetrated too deeply within me; evidently, it is not possible to breathe this atmosphere for a space of many years with impunity! I have wavered long whether I ought to write thee this letter; it is terrible to me to reflect what decision thou wilt arrive at; I trust only in thy love for me. But I have considered that it would be dishonest on my part not to tell thee the truth—the more so as thou hast, perhaps, already begun to take the first measures for the accomplishment of our intention. Akh! it was very beautiful, but impossible of fulfilment! Oh, my friend, regard me as a weak, frivolous woman; despise me, but do not desert me, do not desert thy Irína! . . . I have not the strength to abandon this society, but neither can I live in it without thee. We shall soon return to Petersburg; do thou come thither; dwell there; we will find occupation for thee; thy past labours shall not be wasted; thou shalt find a profitable application for them . . . only live near me, only love me as I am, with all my weaknesses and vices, and understand fully that no one's heart will ever be so tenderly devoted to thee as the heart of thy Irína. Come quickly to me; I shall not have a minute's peace until I see thee.

"Thine, thine, thine, I."

The blood beat like a hammer in Litvínoff's head, and then slowly and heavily retreated to his heart, and became as cold within him as a stone. He read over Irína's letter, and, as on that other occasion in Moscow, fell fainting on the .divan, and remained there motionless. A dark abyss had suddenly surrounded him on all sides, and he stared despairingly, bereft of reason, into the gloom. Thus, once more betrayal, or no, worse than betrayal—a lie and trivialities. . . And life was shattered; everything had been torn up by the roots, utterly, and the only thing to which he might have clung—that last support—was shattered into fragments also! "Follow us to Petersburg,"—he repeated with a bitter, inward laugh: "we will find occupation for thee there" . . . "Will they promote me to be head clerk of a department, I wonder? And who is *we?* That is where her past spoke out! There lies the secret, repulsive thing, which I do not know, but which she would like to obliterate, and burn as in the fire! That is that world of intrigues, of secret relations, of scandals of Byélskys and Dólskys. . . And what a future! what a splendid rôle awaits me! To live near her, to visit her, to share with her the vicious melancholy of a fashionable lady whom society oppresses and bores, though she cannot exist outside its circle, to be her domestic friend, and, of course, the friend of His Excellency also . . . until . . .

until her whim is past, and the plebeian friend loses his piquancy, and that same fat general or Mr. Fínikoff replaces him,—that is both possible and agreeable, and, if you like, profitable . . . she speaks of a profitable application of my talents?—but that design is impossible of realisation, impossible of realisation! . . ." In Litvínoff's soul there arose something in the nature of the momentary gusts of wind which precede a thunderstorm—sudden, wild outbursts. . . Every expression in Irína's letter aroused his indignation; the very assurances as to the immutability of her feelings affronted him. "Things cannot remain like this,"—he exclaimed at last,—"I will not permit her to play so pitilessly with my life. . ."

Litvínoff sprang up, seized his hat. But what was there to be done? Fly to her? Reply to her letter? He halted, and his arms sank by his sides.

Yes: what was there to be done?

Had he not himself proposed to her that fatal choice? It had not turned out as he had wished. . . every choice is subject to that misfortune. She had changed her decision, it is true; she herself had been the first to declare that she would abandon everything and follow him—that was true also. But neither did she deny her guilt, she called herself, in plain terms, a weak woman; she had not meant to deceive him, she had been de-

ceived in herself. . . . . What retort was there to make? At all events, she was not dissimulating, not dealing doubly with him . . . she was frank with him, pitilessly frank. Nothing had forced her to state her intentions on the spot, nothing had prevented her soothing him with promises, putting off everything, leaving everything in uncertainty, until their very departure . . . her departure with her husband for Italy! But she had ruined his life, she had ruined two lives! . . . Was not that enough?

But toward Tatyána she was not to blame; he was to blame, he alone, Litvínoff, and he had no right to shake off from himself the responsibility for that which his fault had imposed, like an iron yoke, upon him. . . . All that was so; but what remained to be done now?

Again he flung himself on the divan, and again, darkly, leaving no trace, with devouring swiftness . . . the moments flitted past. . .

"And why not obey her?"—flashed through his mind. "She loves me, she is mine—and in our very attraction for each other, in that passion which, after the lapse of so many years, has broken out and made its way forth to the surface with such violence, is there not something inevitable, irresistible as the law of nature? Live in Petersburg . . . but shall I be the first man who finds himself in such a position? Yes, and

where could she and I have found a refuge? . . ." And he fell into thought, and the image of Irína, in that aspect in which it had forever imprinted itself on his most recent recollections, softly presented itself before him. . . .

But not for long. . . He recovered himself, and with a fresh outburst of indignation, he thrust away from him both those recollections, and that enchanting image.

" Thou art giving me to drink of that golden cup,"—he exclaimed,—" but there is poison in thy beverage, and thy white wings are soiled with filth. . . Away! To remain here with thee, after having . . . driven away, driven away my betrothed bride . . . would be a dishonourable, a dishonourable act!" He clenched his fists bitterly, and another face, with the imprint of suffering and set features, with speechless reproach in the farewell glance, surged up from the depths. . .

And for a long time Litvínoff tormented himself in this manner; for a long time, like a critically sick man, his tortured thoughts tossed from side to side. . . At last he calmed down; at last he reached a decision. From the very first moment he had foreseen what that decision would be . . . it presented itself to him, at first, as a remote, barely-perceptible spot in the midst of the whirlwind and the gloom of his internal conflict; then it began to come nearer and nearer,

and ended by cutting into his heart with a cold, sharp blade.

Again Litvínoff dragged his trunk forth from the corner; again, without haste, and even with a certain dull carefulness, he packed all his things, rang for a servant, paid his bill, and despatched a note in Russian, to Irína, which ran as follows:

"I do not know whether you are more to blame with respect to me now than you were in days gone by; but I do know that the present blow is much the stronger. . . This is the end. You say to me: 'I cannot'; and I repeat the same to you: I cannot . . . do what you wish. I cannot, and I will not. Do not answer me. You are not in a position to give me the only answer which I would accept. I am going away to-morrow, early, by the first train. Farewell; may you be happy. . . Probably we shall not meet again."

Litvínoff did not leave his room until nightfall; God knows whether he was expecting anything! About seven o'clock in the evening, a lady in a black mantle, with a veil over her face, walked twice past the entrance of his hotel. After stepping a little to one side, and casting a glance at some point in the distance, she suddenly made a decisive movement, and for the third time directed her steps toward the entrance. . .

"Whither are you going, Irína Pávlovna?"—rang out a constrained voice behind her.

She turned round with convulsive swiftness. . Potúgin rushed up to her.

She halted, reflected, and fairly flung herself at him, thrust her arm in his, and drew him aside.

"Take me away, take me away,"—she kept repeating, panting.

"What is the matter with you, Irína Pávlovna?"—he murmured, in amazement.

"Take me away,"—she repeated with redoubled force,—"if you do not wish to have me remain forever . . . . there!"

Potúgin bowed his head submissively, and both walked rapidly away.

Early on the following morning Litvínoff was entirely ready for his journey, when there came into his room . . . that same Potúgin.

He silently approached him, and silently shook his hand. Litvínoff, also, said nothing. Both wore long faces, and both endeavoured in vain to smile.

"I have come to wish you a prosperous journey,"—Potúgin said, at last.

"And how did you know that I was going away to-day?"—inquired Litvínoff.

Potúgin gazed around him, on the floor. . . "It became known to me . . . as you see. Our last conversation finally took such a strange turn.

. . I did not wish to part from you without expressing to you my sincere sympathy."

"Do you sympathise with me now, when I am going away?"

Potúgin gazed mournfully at Litvínoff.—"Ekh, Grigóry Mikhaílitch, Grigóry Mikhaílitch,"—he began, with a short sigh,—"we are in no frame of mind for that now, we are in no mood for subtleties and disputes. Here you are, so far as I am able to judge, decidedly indifferent to our national literature, and therefore, perhaps, you have no conception of Váska Busláeff?"

"Of whom?"

"Of Váska Busláeff, the dashing hero of Nóvgorod . . . in the Collection of Kirshá Daníleff."

"What Busláeff?"—ejaculated Litvínoff, somewhat dazed by the sudden turn which the conversation had taken.—"I don't know."

"Well, no matter. See here, this is what I wished to call to your attention. Váska Busláeff, after he has dragged his Nóvgorodians off to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage, and there, to their horror, has bathed naked in the holy river Jordan, for he believed 'neither in bell-clang, nor in dream, nor in the croaking of birds,'—that logical Váska Busláeff ascends Mount Tabor, and on the crest of that mountain, lies a huge stone, across which all sorts of people have tried, in vain, to leap. . . . Váska wishes to

try his luck also. And on his way up the mountain he encounters a skull, human bones; he kicks it. Well, and the head says to him: 'Why dost thou kick? I have known how to live; I know also how to wallow in the dust—and the same thing shall happen unto thee.'[1] And in fact Váska leaps across the stone, and would have got clear over had not he caught his heel, and cracked his skull. And here I must remark, by the way, that it would not be a bad thing if my friends, the Slavyanophils, who are great hands at kicking all sorts of death's-heads and rotten folks, would ponder over this epic song."

"But what is your object in saying all this?"—interrupted Litvínoff impatiently at last.—"I must go, excuse me. . . ."

"My object is,"—replied Potúgin, and his eyes beamed with a friendly feeling which Litvínoff had never expected from him,—"to keep you from repulsing the dead human skull; and perchance, in return for your goodness, you will succeed in leaping across the fatal stone. I will not detain you any longer, only you must permit me to embrace you in farewell."

"I shall not even attempt to leap across,"—said Litvínoff, as he exchanged the threefold kiss with Potúgin. And to the sorrowful emotion,

[1] The version which I have given, "Vasíly Busláevitch," in "The Epic Songs of Russia" (Charles Scribner's Sons), is from a slightly different original to the one here quoted.—Translator.

which filled his soul to overflowing, there was added, for an instant, compassion for another poor wretch. But he must go, he must go. . . He flung himself about the room.

"I will carry something for you, if you like." —Potúgin offered his services.

"No, thanks, don't trouble yourself; I will manage alone. . . ." He put on his hat, took his bag in his hand.—"So you say,"—he inquired, as he was standing on the threshold,—"that you have seen her?"

"Yes, I have seen her."

"Well . . and what of her?"

Potúgin made no answer for a while.—"She expected you last night. . . and will expect you to-day."

"Ah! Well, then tell her. . . No, it is not necessary, nothing is necessary. Farewell, . . . Farewell!"

"Farewell, Grigóry Mikhaílitch. . . . Let me say one word more to you. You will have time to hear me out: the train does not leave for half an hour yet. You are returning to Russia. . . You will . . . in course of time . . . become active there. . . Permit an old failure—for I, alas! am a failure, and nothing else—to give you a parting bit of advice. On every occasion, when you are obliged to enter upon an undertaking, ask yourself: are you serving civilisation,—in the exact and strict sense of the word,—are you furthering

one of its ideas; is your labour of that pedagogical, European character, which alone is profitable and fruitful in our day, in our country? If so—advance boldly: you are on the right road, and your affair is an honourable one! Glory to God! You are not alone now. You will not be 'a sower of the desert': hard workers . . . . pioneers . . . have already sprung up among us. . . But you do not care to hear about that now.—Good-bye, do not forget me!"

Litvínoff descended the stairs at a run, flung himself into a carriage, and drove to the railway station, without casting a single glance at the town where so much of his own life was being left behind. . . He seemed to be yielding to a billow: it seized him, swept him onward, and he firmly resolved not to resist its impulse . . . he renounced every other manifestation of will.

He was already entering the railway carriage.

"Grigóry Mikhaílovitch . . . Grigóry . . ." he heard a beseeching whisper behind him. He shuddered. . . Could it be Irína? Exactly that: it was she. Wrapped in her maid's shawl, with a travelling hat on her unkempt locks, she was standing on the platform and gazing at him with dimmed eyes. "Turn back, turn back, I have come for thee!" said those eyes. And what, what all, did not they promise! She did not move; she had not the strength to add a single word; everything about her, even the disorder of

her garments, everything seemed to be entreating mercy. . . .

Litvínoff could hardly stand on his feet, could hardly refrain from rushing to her. . . . But the wave to which he had yielded himself asserted its power. . . He sprang into the carriage, and, turning round, he motioned Irína to a place beside him. She understood him. The time was not past. Only one step, one movement, and two lives forever united would have sped forth into the unknown distance. . . While she hesitated a loud whistle rang out, and the train started.

Litvínoff flung himself back, and Irína walked tottering to a bench and sank down upon it, to the extreme amazement of an ex-diplomat who had accidentally wandered into the station. He was only slightly acquainted with Irína, but took a great interest in her, and perceiving that she was lying as though unconscious, he thought that she had had *"une attaque de nerfs,"* and consequently regarded it as his duty, the duty *d'un galant chevalier,* to go to her assistance. But his amazement assumed far greater proportions when, at the first word he addressed to her, she suddenly rose, repulsed the offered arm, and, rushing forth into the street, in a few moments vanished in the milky cloud of mist, which is so characteristic of the Black Forest climate in the early days of autumn.

XXVI

We once chanced to enter the cottage of a peasant woman who had just lost her only, fervently-loved son, and to our no small surprise, we found her entirely composed, almost cheerful.—"Let her alone!" said her husband, whom this surprise did not escape:—"she is hardened just now."—In the same way Litvínoff "was hardened." The same sort of composure came upon him during the first hours of his journey. Utterly annihilated, and hopelessly unhappy, he nevertheless was at rest, at rest after the turmoils and tortures of the preceding week, after all the blows which, one after the other, had descended upon his head. They had shaken him all the more violently because he was not created for such tempests. He no longer had any hope of anything now, and tried not to remember—most of all, not to remember. He was going to Russia . . . he must take refuge somewhere! but he no longer made any plans which personally concerned himself. He did not recognise himself; he did not understand his proceedings; it was exactly as though he had lost his real "I," and, altogether, he felt very little interest in that "I." Sometimes it seemed to him as though

he were carrying his own corpse, and only the bitter convulsions of an incurable spiritual malady, which ran through him now and then, reminded him that he was still endowed with life. At times it seemed incomprehensible to him how a man—a man!—could permit a woman, love, ... to exercise such influence over him. . . . . "A shameful weakness!" he whispered, and shook out his cloak, and settled himself more squarely in his seat, as much as to say, There now, old things are done with, let us start on something new . . . . A minute later, and he merely smiled bitterly and felt amazed at himself. He took to gazing out of the window. The day was grey and damp; there was no rain, but the fog held on, and low-lying clouds veiled the sky. The wind was blowing in the contrary direction to the course of the train; whitish clouds of steam, now alone, now mingled with other, darker clouds of smoke, swept, in an endless series, past the window beside which Litvínoff sat. He began to watch the steam, the smoke. Incessantly whirling, rising and falling, twisting and catching at the grass, at the bushes, playing pranks, as it were, lengthening and melting, puff followed puff . . . . they were constantly changing, and yet remained the same . . . . a monotonous, hurried, tiresome game! Sometimes the wind changed, the road made a turn—the whole mass suddenly disappeared,

and immediately became visible through the opposite window; then, once more, the huge trail flung itself over, and once more veiled from Litvínoff the wide view of the Rhine Valley. He gazed and gazed, and a strange reflection occurred to him. . . He was alone in the carriage; there was no one to interfere with him.—"Smoke, smoke,"—he repeated several times in succession; and suddenly everything appeared to him to be smoke—everything, his own life, everything pertaining to men, especially everything Russian. Everything is smoke and steam,—he thought;—everything seems to be constantly undergoing change; everywhere there are new forms, phenomenon follows phenomenon, but in reality everything is exactly alike; everything is hurrying, hastening somewhither—and everything vanishes without leaving a trace, without having attained to any end whatever; another breeze has begun to blow—and everything has been flung to the other side, and there, again, is the same incessant, agitated—and useless game. He recalled many things which had taken place, with much sound and clatter, before his eyes during the last few years . . . . "smoke,"—he murmured,—"smoke"; he recalled the heated disputes, shovings and shouts at Gubaryóff's, and at the houses of other persons, of high and of low degree, of prominent people, and of people who had lagged behind, of old people and of

young . . . "smoke"—he repeated,—"smoke and steam"; he recalled, in conclusion, the famous picnic also; and other judgments and speeches of other statesmen also recurred to his mind—and even everything which Potúgin had preached . . . . "smoke, smoke, and nothing more." But his own aspirations and feelings and efforts and dreams? He merely waved his hand in renunciation of them.

And in the meantime the train was dashing on, dashing on Rastadt, Karlsruhe and Bruchsal had long since been left behind; the mountains on the right side of the road were retreating, receding into the distance, then advanced again, but were not so lofty now, and were more sparsely covered with forests. . . The train made a sharp turn to one side—and behold, there was Heidelberg. The railway carriages rolled up under the shed of the station; the cries of pedlars, selling every sort of thing, even Russian newspapers, resounded; the travellers fidgeted in their seats, emerged on the platform. But Litvínoff did not leave his corner, and continued to sit with bowed head. Suddenly some one called him by name; he raised his eyes; Bindásoff's ugly face thrust itself through the window, and behind him—or did it only seem so to him?—no, it was a fact: they were all faces from Baden, familiar faces: there was Madame Sukhántchikoff, there was Voroshíloff, and

there was Bambáeff, all of them advancing toward him—and Bindásoff was roaring:

"And where is Pishtchálkin? We have been waiting for him; but never mind, crawl out, soaker, we 're all going to Gubaryóff's."

"Yes, my dear fellow, and besides, Gubaryóff is waiting for us," Bambáeff confirmed his statement, as he stepped forward:—"get out."

Litvínoff would have flown into a rage had it not been for that dead weight which lay upon his heart. He glanced at Bindásoff, and turned silently away.

"I tell you, Gubaryóff is here,"—cried Madame Sukhántchikoff, her eyes almost starting from their sockets.

Litvínoff did not stir.

"Yes, listen, Litvínoff," began Bambáeff, at last. "Not only is Gubaryóff here, but there is a whole phalanx of the most splendid, the cleverest young men, Russians,—and all are devoting themselves to the natural sciences, all cherish the most noble convictions! Do stop, on their account, for goodness' sake. Here, for example, is a certain . . . ekh! I 've forgotten his name! but he 's simply a genius!"

"Come, let him alone, let him alone, Rostisláff Ardaliónitch!"—interposed Madame Sukhántchikoff,—"let him alone! you see what sort of a man he is; and all his tribe are of the same sort. He has an aunt: at first I thought her a sen-

sible woman, but day before yesterday I travelled hither in her company—she had only just arrived in Baden, and lo and behold! back she flies,—well, sir, I travelled with her, and I began to question her. . . If you will believe me, not one word could I get out of the haughty creature. The disgusting aristocrat!"

Poor Kapitólina Márkovna—an aristocrat! Did she ever expect such a disgrace?

But Litvínoff still held his peace, and turned away, and pulled his cap down over his eyes. At last the train started.

"Come, say something by way of farewell, you man of stone!"—shouted Bambáeff.

"You can't go off like this!"

"Trash! simpleton!"—roared out Bindásoff. The carriages rolled more and more rapidly, and he could revile with impunity.—"Miser! Mollusc! Drunken bummer!"

Whether Bindásoff invented this last epithet on the spur of the moment, or whether it had reached him from other hands, at all events it evidently afforded great pleasure to the extremely noble young men who were studying the natural sciences, for a few days later it made its appearance in the Russian periodical sheet, which was published at that time in Heidelberg, under the title: *À tout venant je crache!* or "If God does n't desert you, the pigs won't eat you."[1] [2]

[1] "Him whom God helps, nobody can harm."—TRANSLATOR.
[2] An historical fact.

But Litvínoff kept repeating his former word: smoke, smoke, smoke! Here now, he thought, there are now more than a hundred Russian students in Heidelberg; all are studying chemistry, physics, physiology—they will not even listen to anything else . . . but let five or six years elapse, and there will not be fifteen men in the courses of those same celebrated professors . . . the wind will change, the smoke will rush to the other side . . . smoke . . . smoke . . . smoke![1]

Toward nightfall he passed Kassel. Together with the twilight, an intolerable anguish descended like a vulture upon him, and, nestling in the corner of the railway carriage, he began to weep. For a long time his tears flowed without relieving his heart, but torturing him in a caustic, bitter way; and, at that same time, in one of the hostelries of Kassel, on her bed, in a burning fever, lay Tatyána; Kapitólina Márkovna sat beside her.

"Tánya,"—she said,—"for God's sake, allow me to send a telegram to Grigóry Mikhaílovitch; do let me, Tánya!"

"No, aunty,"—she answered,—"it is not necessary; do not feel alarmed. Give me some water; this will soon pass off."

And, in fact, a week later her health mended, and the two friends resumed their journey.

[1] Litvínoff's presentiment was fulfilled. In 1866, there were thirteen Russian students in the summer term, and twelve in the winter term, at Heidelberg.

XXVII

Without halting either in Petersburg or in Moscow, Litvínoff returned to his estate. He was frightened when he saw his father, so greatly enfeebled and aged had the latter become. The old man rejoiced at the sight of his son, as much as a man can rejoice whose life is drawing to a close; he immediately transferred to him all his affairs, which were in great confusion, and after creaking on a few weeks longer, departed from the arena of earth. Litvínoff was left alone in his ancient wing of the manor-house, and with a heavy heart, without hope, without zeal and without money, he began to farm the estate. Farming an estate in Russia is a cheerless affair, only too well known to many persons; we will not enlarge on the point of how bitter it seemed to Litvínoff. As a matter of course, there could be no question of reforms and innovations; the application of the knowledge which he had acquired abroad was deferred for an indefinite period; want compelled him to worry on from day to day, to consent to all sorts of compromises,—both material and moral. New ideas won their way badly, old ones had lost their force; the ignorant clashed with the dishonest; his whole deranged

existence was in constant motion, like a quaking bog, and only the great word "liberty" moved, like the spirit of God, over the waters. Patience was required, first of all, and not passive but active, persistent patience, not devoid, at times, of tact, not devoid of guile . . . . which Litvínoff, in his actual spiritual state, found doubly difficult. He had very little desire left to live. . . Whence could he summon a desire to bestir himself and work?

But a year passed, then a second, the third was beginning. The grand thought was gradually being realised, was being transformed into flesh and blood: a sprout was putting forth from the seed that had been sown; and its enemies, either open or secret, could no longer trample it under foot. Litvínoff himself, although he had ended by giving up the greater part of his land to the peasants, on the rotation-of-crops system, that is to say, had returned to the wretched, primitive methods of farming, yet had some success: he re-established the factory, set up a tiny farm with five hired labourers,—he had as many as forty, at different times,—paid off the principal part of the debts. . . And his spirit grew firm within him; again he began to resemble the Litvínoff of former days. The painful, deeply-concealed feeling, it is true, never left him, and he had grown sedate beyond his years, had shut himself up in his narrow circle, had broken

off all his previous connections . . . . but the deathlike indifference had vanished, and again he moved about among the living, and behaved like a living man. The last traces of the witchery which had taken possession of him had vanished also: everything which had taken place at Baden presented itself to him as in a dream. . And Irína? She, also, had paled and disappeared, and it was only in a confused way that Litvínoff was conscious of something terrible beneath the mist in which her image had gradually become enveloped. News of Tatyána reached him from time to time; he knew that she and her aunt had settled on her little estate, about two hundred versts from him, were living quietly and receiving hardly any guests, -and, for the rest, were composed and well.—But one day, one beautiful May day, he was sitting in his study, and indifferently turning over the leaves of the last number of a Petersburg journal: a servant entered and announced the arrival of his aged uncle. This uncle was the first cousin of Kapitólina Márkovna, and had recently visited her. He had purchased an estate in Litvínoff's neighbourhood, and was on his way thither. He spent a whole day with his nephew, and told him a great deal about Tatyána's manner of life. On the day after his departure, Litvínoff sent her a letter, the first since their parting. He requested permission to renew the acquaintance. by letter

at least, and also desired to know whether he must forever abandon the thought of seeing her some day? Not without agitation did he await the reply . . . and a reply arrived at last. Tatyána made a friendly response to his question. "If you should take a fancy to visit us," she said in conclusion, "come, we shall be glad to see you: they say that weak people feel more comfortable together than apart." Kapitólina Márkovna sent her compliments. Litvínoff was as happy as a child; his heart had not beaten so cheerfully for a long time. And he suddenly felt relieved and bright. . . Exactly as when the sun rises and drives away the shades of night, a light zephyr flits with the sun's rays over the face of the reviving earth. All that day Litvínoff did nothing but smile, even when he made the rounds of his farm and issued his orders. He immediately began to make preparations for the journey, and two weeks later he set off to Tatyána.

XXVIII

He travelled rather slowly along the country roads, without any particular adventures: only once the tire on one of the hind wheels broke; a blacksmith welded and welded it, cursed it and himself, and then threw up the job; luckily, it turned out that one can travel very well indeed in our country even with a broken tire, especially on a " soft " road, that is to say, in the mud. On the other hand, Litvínoff had two or three decidedly curious encounters. At one posting-station he found a meeting of justices of the peace, and among their number, Pishtchálkin, who produced upon him the impression of being a Solon or a Solomon: such lofty wisdom did his speech breathe forth, with such unbounded respect did both landed proprietors and peasants bear themselves toward him: . . . and in his appearance, also, Pishtchálkin had begun to resemble a sage of olden days: his hair had receded from his temples, and his face, which had grown fuller, had become completely petrified into a sort of majestic jelly of virtue unhampered by anything whatsoever. He congratulated Litvínoff on his arrival " in my own district—if I may make so bold as to use so ambitious an expression,"—

and thereupon, instantly sank into a paroxysm of well-intentioned emotions. But he did succeed in imparting one piece of news, namely, concerning Voroshíloff. That paladin of the gilded classes had again entered the military service, and had already managed to deliver a lecture to the officers of his regiment on "Buddhism," or "dynamism," or something of that sort. . . . . Pishtchálkin could not remember exactly what. At the next posting-station they did not harness Litvínoff's horses for a long time; the affair happened at daybreak,—and he was dozing as he sat in his calash. A voice which struck him as familiar awakened him: he opened his eyes. . .

Heavens! was it not Mr. Gubaryóff who was standing there in a grey round jacket and flapping sleeping-trousers, and swearing, on the porch of the posting-cottage? . . . No, it was not Mr. Gubaryóff. . . But what a startling resemblance! . . . . Only, this gentleman's mouth was wider and fuller of teeth, and the gaze of his dismal eyes was still fiercer, his nose was bigger, and his beard thicker, and his whole aspect was heavier and more repulsive.

"The sca-aoundrels, the sca-aoundrels!"—he was repeating, slowly and viciously stretching his wolfish mouth very wide:—"the damned peasantry. . . . Here you see it . . . . . this lauded liberty . . . . and you can't get any horses . . . the sca-aoundrels!"

"The sca-aoundrels, the sca-aoundrels!"—another voice here made itself heard inside the house, and on the porch there presented himself,—also in a grey round jacket and flapping sleeping-trousers,—presented himself, this time actually and indubitably, the genuine Mr. Gubaryóff himself, Stepán Nikoláevitch Gubaryóff. "The damned peasantry!"—he continued, in imitation of his brother (it appeared that the first gentleman was his elder brother, the "Danteist" [1] of the old school, who managed his estate.)—"They ought to be flogged, that 's what they ought; flogged on their snouts, that 's the sort of liberty they need—flogged on their teeth. . . They talk about . . . forsooth, ... about the mayor of the district! . . . I 'll give it to them! . . . Yes, and where 's that M'sieu' Roston? . . . What does he superintend? . . . It 's his business, the cursed sluggard . . . not to reduce one to anxiety. . . . ."

"But I have repeatedly told you, brother,"—put in the elder Gubaryóff,—"that he was not fit for anything, a regular sluggard! Only you, for old acquaintance' sake. . . . M'sieu' Roston, M'sieu' Roston! . . . . What has become of you?"

"Roston! Roston!"—shouted the younger, the great Gubaryóff.—"Come, brother Doremedónt Nikoláitch, call him well!"

[1] A term applied to cruel serf-owners.—Translator.

"That 's precisely what I am doing, brother Stepán Nikoláitch.—Monsieur Roston!"

"Here I am, here I am, here I am!"—a precipitate voice made itself heard, and from round the corner of the cottage sprang forth—Bambáeff.

Litvínoff fairly cried aloud in amazement. On the ill-starred enthusiast mournfully dangled a hussar jacket abbreviated by wear, with rents in the sleeves; his features were not so much altered as pinched and wizened; his extremely uneasy little eyes expressed slavish terror and hungry subserviency; but his dyed moustache bristled up above his full lips as of old. The Gubaryóff brothers set to work instantly and simultaneously to berate him from the elevation of the porch; he halted in front of them, below, in the mud, and, with his back meekly bowed, endeavoured to placate them with a timid smile, crumpling his cap in his red fingers, shifting from one foot to the other, and muttering that the horses would make their appearance immediately. . . But the brothers did not cease, until the younger, at last, let his eyes fall on Litvínoff. Whether he recognised him, whether he felt ashamed in the presence of a stranger, at all events, he suddenly turned on his heel, in bear-like fashion, and, gnawing his beard, hobbled into the posting-cottage; his brother instantly became mute, and turning round, in bear-like fashion also, followed

in his footsteps. The great Gubaryóff, evidently, had not lost his influence in his own country either.

Bambáeff was on the point of following softly after the brothers. . . Litvínoff called him by name. He glanced round, took another look, and, recognising Litvínoff, fairly precipitated himself at him, with outstretched arms; but when he had rushed up to the carriage, and grasped the door, he fell against it with his breast and burst into a flood of tears.

"Stop, do stop, Bambáeff,"—Litvínoff said again and again, bending over him and touching him on the shoulder.

But he continued to sob.—"This . . . . this . . . . this is what I have come to . . ." he murmured, sobbing.

"Bambáeff!"—thundered the brothers inside the cottage.

Bambáeff raised his head and hastily wiped away his tears.

"Good morning, my dear fellow,"—he whispered,—"good morning and good-bye! . . . . you hear, they are calling me."

"But how in the world do you come to be here?"—inquired Litvínoff:—"and what is the meaning of all this? I thought they called you a Frenchman. . ."

"I am their . . . their house-steward, their butler,"—replied Bambáeff, and jerked his

finger in the direction of the cottage.—"And I came to be a Frenchman by chance, by way of a jest. What can a man do, brother? When there is nothing to eat, you see, and you have spent your last penny, you put your neck into the noose, willy-nilly. You don't feel like being ambitious."

"But has *he* been long in Russia? And how did he part from his former comrades?"

"Ekh, brother! All that is over now. . . The weather has changed, you know. . . . He simply pitched Madame Sukhántchikoff, Matryóna Kuzmínitchna, out, neck and crop. She went off to Portugal, out of grief."

"Went to Portugal? What nonsense is this?"

"Yes, brother, to Portugal, with two Matryónovtzys."

"With whom?"

"With the Matryónovtzys: that's what the adherents of her faction are called."

"Has Matryóna Kuzmínitchna a faction, and is it numerous?"

"Why, it consists of just those two men. But *he* returned here nearly six months ago. Then others got into trouble, but he's all right. He lives in the country with his brother, and you just ought to hear now . . . ."

"Bambáeff!"

"Immediately, Stepán Nikoláitch, immedi-

ately. But thou, my dear fellow, art blooming, thou art enjoying thyself! Well, God be thanked! Where art thou bound for now?—Why, I never thought, I never foresaw that. . . . Dost thou remember Baden? Ekh, that was living! By the way, dost thou remember Bindásoff also? Just imagine, he is dead. He obtained a position in the excise office, and got into a fight in a dram-shop; and they smashed his skull with a billiard-cue. Yes, yes, hard times have come upon us! But I still say: Russia, what a land this Russia is! Look even at that pair of geese: surely, in all Europe, there is nothing like them! Real Arzamás fowls!"

And after paying this parting tribute to his ineradicable necessity to go into raptures, Bambáeff ran into the station-cottage, where his name was again being uttered, not without a few emphatic epithets.

Toward the end of that day, Litvínoff drove up to Tatyána's village. The little house, wherein dwelt his former betrothed, stood on a hill, above a small river, in the centre of a garden which had been newly laid out. The little house was new also, only just built, and was visible from afar, across river and meadow. It revealed itself to Litvínoff at a distance of two versts with its pointed partial upper story and row of windows, which gleamed brightly in the rays of the evening sun. From the time he quitted the

last station, he had begun to experience a secret agitation; but at this point downright consternation seized upon him, joyous consternation, not unmingled with a certain alarm. "How will they receive me?"—he thought,—"how shall I present myself?" . . . In order to divert his thoughts somewhat he began to chat with the postilion, a peasant of the steppes, with a grey beard, but who had charged him for thirty versts, when, in reality, the distance was not twenty-five. He asked him: Did he know the Shestóff ladies?

"The Shestóffs, do you mean? Of course I know them! Kind ladies they are, there 's no denying that! And they heal us poor folks too. I 'm telling you the truth. Regular women doctors! Folks go to them from the whole county. That 's so. They just crawl there in hordes. No sooner does any one fall ill, or cut himself, or anything else, than he immediately hastens to them, and they immediately apply a fomentation, or powders, or a plaster,—and that 's the end of it: it helps. But don't dare to offer gifts of gratitude; we don't consent to that, say they; we don't do it for money. They 've set up a school, too. . . . Well, but that does n't amount to anything."

While the postilion was talking, Litvínoff never took his eyes from the little house. . . Now a woman in white came out on the balcony, stood, and stood, and then vanished. . . . "Can it be

she?" His heart fairly leapt within him. "Faster! Faster!" he shouted to the postilion: the latter whipped up his horses. A few moments more . . . and the calash rolled in through the open gates. . . And on the porch Kapitólina Márkovna was already standing, and, quite beside herself, was clapping her hands and screaming: "I recognised him, I was the first to recognise him! 'T is he! 't is he!—I recognised him!"

Litvínoff sprang out of the calash, without giving the groom who came running up a chance to open the door, and hastily embracing Kapitólina Márkovna, rushed into the house, through the ante-room, into the salon. . . . Before him, all covered with confusion, stood Tatyána. She glanced at him with her kind, affectionate eyes (she had grown a little thinner, but it became her), and offered him her hand. But he did not take the hand, he fell on his knees before her. She had not in the least expected this, and did not know what to say, what to do.—The tears rushed to her eyes. She was startled, but her whole countenance beamed with joy. . . . "Grigóry Mikhaílitch, what is this, Grigóry Mikhaílitch?" she said . . . but he continued to kiss the hem of her garment . . . and with emotion he recalled how he had lain on his knees before her, in the same manner, at Baden. . . . . But then —and now!

"Tánya,"—he repeated, over and over again,—"Tánya! hast thou forgiven me, Tánya?"

"Aunty, aunty, what is this?"—Tatyána appealed to Kapitólina Márkovna, who entered at the moment.

"Do not hinder him, do not hinder him, Tánya,"—replied the kind old woman.—"Thou seest he has confessed his wrong."

But it is time to make an ending; and besides, there is nothing more to add; the reader will divine the outcome for himself. . . . But what of Irína?

She is just as charming as ever, in spite of her thirty years. Innumerable young men fall in love with her, and even more would fall in love with her, if . . . . if . . . . Reader, will not you consent to be transported with us, for a few moments, to Petersburg, to one of the most prominent buildings there? Behold: before you lies a spacious room, furnished, we will not say "richly,"—that is too vulgar an expression,—but imposingly, in a stately, impressive style. Do you feel a certain tremor of servility? You must know: you have entered a temple, a temple consecrated to the loftiest decorum, to virtue overflowing with love—in a word, to unearthly virtue. A certain mysterious, actually mysterious silence receives you into its embrace. The velvet portières, the velvet curtains at the windows, the soft,

thick carpet on the floor, all seem destined and designed to soothe and soften all harsh sounds and violent emotions. Carefully-shaded lamps inspire dignified feelings; a decorous perfume is disseminated in the close atmosphere; the very samovár on the table is hissing in a repressed and modest way. The mistress of the house, an important personage in Petersburg society, is talking in a barely audible tone; she always speaks in that way, as though there were a very critically ill, almost dying person in the room. The other ladies, in imitation of her, barely whisper; but to-day, her sister, who is pouring tea, is moving her lips with entire absence of sound, so that the young man who is sitting before her, and has accidentally got into the temple of decorum, is even perplexed to know what she wants of him, and she rustles at him, for the sixth time: "*Voulez vous une tasse de thé?*" In the corner, young, good-looking men are to be seen; mild deference beams in their glances; tranquilly mild, although insinuating, is the expression of their faces; a multitude of tokens of distinction glitter mildly on their breasts. The conversation which is in progress is mild also; it touches upon spiritual and patriotic subjects, *The Mysterious Drop* by F. M. Glínka, the mission to the East, the monasteries and brotherhoods of White Russia. From time to time, treading noiselessly over the soft carpet, liveried lackeys pass to and

fro; their huge calves, clothed in tightly-fitting silk stockings, quiver calmly at every step; the respectful quiver of their stout muscles only intensifies the general impression of magnificence, benevolence, devoutness. . . It is a temple! It is a temple!

"Have you seen Madame Ratmíroff to-day?" —asks a personage gently.

"I met her to-day at Lise's," replies the mistress of the house, like an æolian harp:—"I feel sorry for her. . . She has an embittered mind . . . . *elle n'a pas la foi.*"

"Yes, yes,"—repeats the personage;—"I remember that Peter Ivánitch said that of her, and it was very truly said—he said *qu'elle a . . . qu'elle a* an embittered mind."

"*Elle n'a pas la foi—*" the voice of the hostess dies away in the air, like the smoke of incense. —"*C'est une ame égarée.* She has an embittered mind."

"She has an embittered mind,"—repeats her sister, with her lips alone.

And that is why all the young men, without exception, do not fall in love with Irína. . . They are afraid of her . . . they are afraid of her "embittered mind."

This is the form which the current phrase [illegible] has assumed; in that phrase, as in every [illegible] there is a grain of truth. And it is not

the young men alone who fear her; the older men, and persons of high rank, and even personages, fear her also. No one is capable of noting so accurately and delicately the ridiculous or the petty side of a character, no one possesses such a gift for pitilessly branding it with an unforgettable word. . . . And that word burns all the more painfully, because it proceeds from a fragrant, exquisitely beautiful mouth. . . . It would be difficult to say what is taking place within that soul; but rumour does not bestow upon any one of her adorers the title of the favoured suitor.

Irína's husband is advancing rapidly along that road which the French call the road of honours. The fat general is overtaking him; the condescending one is being left behind. And in that same town where Irína dwells, dwells also our friend, Sozónt Potúgin: he rarely sees her, and she has no particular need for maintaining relations with him. . . The little girl who was intrusted to his guardianship died not long ago.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

3 1158 00515 3753